

READER



The best Chicago albums of the 2010s

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ON THE COVER: ILLUSTRATION BY JASON WYATT FREDERICK. FOR MORE OF JASON'S WORK, GO TO CARGOCOLLECTIVE.COM/JWFREDERICK

NOTE FROM AN EDITOR

AS WE AT the Reader head into 2020, a spirit of transformation and renewal prevails. In keeping with that spirit, we're publishing what as far as anyone here knows is the first music critics' poll in the paper's nearly 50-year history. Initially the brainchild of Reader senior staff writer Leor Galil, it quickly grew to involve nearly half the editorial department and dozens upon dozens

of outside contributors. Everyone chose their ten favorite Chicago albums of the past ten years, and we compiled all those picks into a ranked list of several hundred releases. We hope that this list will provide a durable tool for discovery, rather than disappearing into the memory hole along with the glut of year-in-review pieces that music journalists are obligated to churn out

annually. The project's online form in particular will not only stick around longer than this paper will be on the streets but will also include streamable music from 50 records we've decided to spotlight. May it serve as a gateway into the richness and depth of Chicago's music community at least until we build the next one in 2030—if not longer.

—PHILIP MONTORO



The *jiaozi* come ten to a bowl in an inky bath of soy and black vinegar. 📷 JEFF MARINI FOR CHICAGO READER

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Lao Peng You fights for your right to dumplings

A Ukrainian Village specialist doughs it real good.

By **MIKE SULA**

I can make OK dumplings, I guess, but I wouldn't dream of letting my mother-in-law try them. Her daughter makes them way better than I do, but there's nothing like Omma's *mandu*, which have nostalgia on their side.

Daniel and Eric Wat learned to make dumplings from their grandmother while growing up in the western suburbs. She learned to make them from her mother while growing up near Shanghai and brought her skills along via Hong Kong. "I started cooking because of

my fear my family would not be able to eat my grandmother's food as she got older," says Eric Wat. The Wat brothers' dumplings are at the practical and spiritual heart of their new Ukrainian Village restaurant Lao Peng You, which means "Old Friend." But they're not exactly their grandmother's dumplings: "My Nai Nai always said if we knew how to make her food we wouldn't need her anymore," he says. "So she wouldn't tell me what she was doing. I made *jiaozi* my whole life just trying to recreate something that was close to what she'd do."

With at least one variety for each letter of the alphabet (*quenelle*, *xiao long bao*, *zongzi*)—and their ubiquity on almost every

continent—dumplings are a virtual human right. But here in Chicago, real, handmade Chinese dumplings of quality are rare outside of Chinatown. Apart from specialists such as the great Qing Xiang Yuan Dumplings, they're not terribly common there either.

But these are *jiaozi*—silky, two-pleated, half-moon purses clutching firm, often fragrant farces: beef and cilantro; pork and dill; egg, mushroom, and chive; among four others. They come ten to a bowl swimming in an inky bath of soy and black vinegar, shimmering with amoebas of chili oil that in composite isn't nearly as fierce as it looks. It doesn't matter. The broth is an ideal amniotic waiting room to stage these delicate dumplings,



Brenda Siharath prepares dumplings filled with pork and dill. JEFF MARINI FOR CHICAGO READER

bobbing safely until plucked by chopsticks and swiped through the clear, ruby-red house-made chili oil, which is also not as savage as it looks. This liquid presentation solves the problem of perishability in an item that may be just as delightful when steamed or pan-fried but is more prone to drying or tearing.

The brothers say they're not focusing on any particular regional Chinese cuisine. "We are Chinese Americans after all," says Daniel. "We grew up eating a mixture of different regional Chinese dishes."

But at the moment, Lao Peng You does have a particularly northern Chinese bent (the Wats's grandfather hailed from the north).

And among the northern Chinese restaurants that have taken hold in Chinatown over the last eight years, they aren't the first to strike ground outside of Chinatown (Lincoln Park's relatively new Xi'an Dynasty Cuisine was first, along with a similar dumpling soup).

Two varieties of *bing* are of a northern style themselves: chubby coiled flatbreads rolled and pan-fried to order with a thick, crackly exterior and slightly gooey doughy interior studded with cumin-y lamb bits or green onion. Swipe these through your preferred blend of soy, vinegar, and oil available at the utensil station next to the counter.

The brothers adhere to a template—aro-

matic-infused soy, black vinegar, and chili oil—that's present across their menu. "If you like one thing you should probably like everything we offer," says Eric. "The concept was sort of modeled after a taqueria, where you use a few ingredients and create a multitude of dishes. You only have to decide what kind of textures or fillings you want."

But it is dough that distinguishes Lao Peng You, which extends to noodles as well, from a pile of chewy, cold shoelace-gauge tentacles showered in peanut, cilantro, and green onions, deployed also in chicken and vegetarian mushroom broth soups; to wider slippery ribbons swimming in a beef noodle soup fortified

with fermented broad bean paste, the deep bowl sprouting with a bouquet of fresh, green cress.

There's a handful of familiar smaller plates: sliced beef shanks in chili oil; cold chicken spiced with citrusy green peppercorns; cold steamed eggplant; or creamy housemade tofu.

Along with its focus, there is a pervading restraint across Lao Peng You's menu. Sichuan peppercorn freaks, chili fiends, and tweakers might look at some of these dishes and expect the electric *ma la* buzz common to that region, but it's not there. Similarly, a few beverages hold back on the sugar that might otherwise obscure the light tannic pleasures of milk tea

FOOD & DRINK



Eric Wat dresses some of Lao Peng You's non-dumpling dishes, which include cold steamed eggplant, cold noodles, and vegetarian noodle soup.  JEFF MARINI FOR CHICAGO READER

with herbal jelly or a fizzy pink soda derived from salty preserved plums. What comes across with everything—apart from soy, chili, and vinegar—is extraordinary technique.

People seem to appreciate it. When they opened, the brothers hoped they'd sell about 1,400 dumplings a week among seven varieties. Presently they're cranking out 1,500 to 2,000 of each in that time, and they've still had to close early on occasions when they run out. With the brand new Year of the Rat starting last weekend, there is no more auspicious time to eat these dumplings.

But the big question is: What does Nai Nai

think? The brothers laugh sheepishly. She's been in for lunch but hasn't eaten the dumplings. They're not eager for her feedback.

"It's the most terrifying thing we could do," says Daniel.

"The best way to describe it in Chinese is *bucuo*. It's never 'good.' It's always 'not bad,'" says Eric. "If we ever thought we did something good, it would make us feel lazy." 

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NEWS & POLITICS



Alderman Scott Waguespack campaigning with longshot mayoral candidate Lori Lightfoot last winter

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POLITICS

Myth buster

Contrary to what Hillary said, you don't have to be liked to get stuff done.

By **BEN JORAVSKY**

Hillary Clinton's latest outburst against Bernie Sanders gives me a chance to shatter one of my least favorite myths about Chicago politics—that popularity is linked to productivity or that only those who go along get things done.

No, no, not true. Though good luck getting anyone to believe that—especially here in Chicago, where going along to get along is a way of life.

First, a reminder about what Hillary said about Bernie this time around, in an interview with the *Hollywood Reporter*:

"Nobody likes him, nobody wants to work with him, he got nothing done. He was a career politician. It's all just baloney, and I feel so bad that people got sucked into it."

You know, I'm no Sigmund Freud, but it sure looks like Hillary's not about to get over that 2016 primary campaign anytime soon.

Her comments are so Chicago. Right up there with the notion that you have to put up with a little mayoral corruption if you want the trains to run on time.

This notion should have been disproved in 2006 during an especially corrupt moment in Mayor Daley's fifth term, when the trains were

NEWS & POLITICS

also running late. So you might say Chicago got the worst of both worlds. Yet the voters overwhelmingly re-elected Daley anyway.

Back to Hillary's comments. I hear variations on this theme all the time from mayoral supporters who are contemptuous of mayoral critics. They say things like:

"I'm so sick and tired of hearing him complaining . . ."

Or, "Why can't he just shut up and get along?"

Or, as the first mayor Daley—Richard J.—once put it about council critics: "How many trees have they planted?"

Clinton is saying that being popular with other politicians is how you get things done. And that the reason Bernie can't get things done is because no one likes him.

First of all, I'm not even sure that getting things done is all that great, if the thing that gets done is something you wouldn't want in the first place. Like Donald Trump's tax break for the rich.

Second, it's inaccurate to say Bernie can't get things done. He managed to move health care from the fringes of the left to the center, something neither the Clintons nor Obama could do.

And third, Sanders hasn't been able to achieve his legislative goals—like national health care—because they're too radical for the powers that be. Not because he's unlikeable. Hell, Bernie couldn't get them passed if he told jokes, juggled, and did his Richard Nixon impression.

Finally, if Sanders's congressional colleagues don't like him, it's probably because he makes them look bad by criticizing the status quo.

I suppose his local equivalent is Scott Waguespack, alderman of the 32nd ward. For years, Waguespack had a reputation for being unlikeable. I can't tell you how many aldermen would tell me something like: "I know Scott's your guy, but no one likes him, and he can't get anything done."

I disagreed on both fronts. For one thing, Scott is one of the nicest guys I've ever met in Chicago politics—eminently likable. For another, he got a lot of things done in the Daley and Emanuel years.

What he got done just wasn't something that the mayor or his supporters wanted Waguespack to do.

He helped expose the wasteful and/or corrupt proposals that the mayor was ordering

the council to pass, like Daley's parking meter deal.

Not only did Waguespack vote against the parking meter deal, he produced estimates that showed we were selling a valuable asset for less than it was worth.

You know what he got for speaking the truth? The enmity of many of his colleagues, who hated him for making them look bad when they approved this rip-off.

Funny how things can change. In 2018, Waguespack had the foresight to endorse Lori Lightfoot in her long-shot race for mayor. This was back before even the experts predicted Lightfoot could win. Which shows you what the experts know.

Lightfoot repaid Waguespack by forcing his colleagues to elect him chairman of the finance committee—perhaps the most prestigious position in the City Council.

Recently Waguespack proposed a ban on foam to-go containers in Chicago restaurants.

If he'd done that back in the days of his unpopularity, Mayors Rahm or Daley would have ordered the aldermen to bury it in the rules committee.

Then if Rahm or Daley subsequently decided they needed the legislation, they would've had one of their favorite aldermanic apple polishers introduce a more watered-down version of the bill.

It would've passed, and the aldermanic apple polishers would've told me: "Told you, your guy can't get anything done."

Well, we'll see if Waguespack's alliance with Lightfoot can get the foam to-go container ban passed.

As to the issue of popularity, I called Waguespack to ask how he was getting along with the other aldermen since he became finance committee chair.

"I never thought I was *that* unpopular back in the days of Rahm and Daley—I tried to be nice to everyone," Waguespack said. "But now that you mention it, there were some guys who might say hello to me when we passed in the hall. But they'd keep themselves at arm's length if the mayor was around—because they feared that if Rahm saw them talking to me, they'd get reprimanded. That doesn't happen anymore."

I'm telling you—if Scott stays on Lori's good side, pretty soon the other aldermen will name him Mr. Congeniality. 

 @joravben

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NEWS & POLITICS

BOWELS OF DEMOCRACY

OBJECTION!

Who needs Facebook and Russian trolls when Illinois election laws sow plenty of bad faith?

BY MAYA DUKMASOVA

Election season in Illinois brings the usual accusations of corruption, copious paperwork, and byzantine bureaucratic processes to get on the ballot. Here's how a seemingly simple, constitutionally sound, taxpayer-dollar-conscious, efficiency-oriented state law can seed doubts about election integrity.

As you might not recall, to get on the primary ballot, candidates have to file a certain number of signatures on a petition nominating them for office. Chicago mayoral candidates, for example, must have 12,500 valid signatures; major party U.S. Senate candidates in Illinois need 5,000; candidates for state senate seats need only 1,000. For each signature to count, the people signing candidates' petitions have to be real people—voters registered at the address they indicate on the petition. That address has to be in the district or jurisdiction that the candidate is running to represent. The signer also can't have signed for any other candidate in that race.

After candidates file, their opponents will often challenge the validity of their signatures (the signature isn't from a registered voter, the voter doesn't live in the district, etc.). The Illinois State Board of Elections set the deadline for objections for the March 17 primary ballot at 5 PM on December 9.

Now pay close attention: per state law, those wishing to challenge a candidate's petition signatures have to file an original and two copies of a packet containing a narrative summary of their objections and a set of "appendix recapitulation" sheets. These sheets mirror the candidate's original petition pages, only instead of having lines for signatures and signatories' addresses, the appendix recapitulation sheets have lines on which the objector marks the reason for her objection. Say John Smith signed

on the first line of page 15 of the candidate's petition, and the objector has found that John Smith doesn't live in the district in which the candidate is running. On the first line of page 15 of their appendix recapitulation sheet, the objector would check off "signer not in district" as the reason for challenging the signature.

Once petition challenges are received, the State Board of Elections keeps one copy of the objection on file at the Thompson Center (a place whose glassy postmodern architecture deliciously reflects the spirit of the winding, tubular state election bureaucracy), and transmits the original and the other copy to the designated local election board that will examine the validity of the objections. (As we know, objections are just as likely to be bogus as the original signatures and therefore receive administrative hearings in which candidates and objectors have a chance to argue about their validity.) The state board itself only examines objections to candidates for statewide office (like governor or secretary of state) and for offices whose districts cross county lines. County election officials hear cases related to districts within their counties. Objections to candidates running to represent constituencies that are fully within the city of Chicago, or that overlap city boundaries, are sent to the Chicago Board of Elections for review.

The designated election board then notifies the candidates being challenged. Usually they send the paperwork via the county sheriff, or through certified mail, and sometimes—like the Chicago Board of Elections does—both. So, within days of the objection being filed, the candidates receive at least one of the copies of the objection packet first filed at the state board of elections. They then have a few days to prepare to fight the objector's challenges. Campaign staff usually spend those days feverishly

combing the appendix recapitulation sheets for any apparent errors, and double-checking the validity of the signatures they've collected.

Wondering why you should care? Besides this being how your democracy works, one campaign's experience also shows how this process can generate deep skepticism about electoral integrity. On November 25, 2019, Froylan "Froy" Jimenez, a first-time candidate running for state senate in the First District against incumbent Antonio Munoz, filed a petition to get on the Democratic primary ballot with 2,265 signatures. On December 10, the day after objections were due, Jimenez contacted the state board of elections to ask to see the objection that was filed against him, according to his attorney Adolfo Mondragon. Candidates can waive service from the sheriff/certified mail and see the objections faster if they provide the state board with a notarized affidavit. Jimenez faxed the waiver the next afternoon and received an e-mail with a scanned

attachment of the objection a few minutes later. The campaign volunteers immediately set about checking the appendix recapitulation sheets against their signatures and voter records.

Jimenez didn't waive service in time to stop it, though. The state board had already given the Chicago Board of Elections the original and one copy of the objection on the 10th. That same day the copy was stuffed in a certified mail envelope and sent to Jimenez, and a copy of the original was made for the Cook County Sheriff's office to deliver.

On December 12, Jimenez received notice that the certified letter was ready to pick up at the post office and a sheriff's deputy also stopped by to deliver the objection. Once the campaign examined both deliveries, they saw an alarming discrepancy: The copy delivered by certified mail (one of the two copies originally dropped off by the objector) matched the PDF e-mailed by the state board, which was a scan of the copy they kept in their file. The packet delivered by the sheriff, however, had 30 more

objections. The next week, when Jimenez's campaign showed up to the Chicago Board of Election to argue about the signatures, they saw that the board was also using the version of the packet that had more objections.

It all came down to the original objection not matching its two "copies."

Officials from both the Illinois State Board of Elections and the Chicago Board of Elections told me that this isn't so strange. In the rush to build objections that are often hundreds of pages long, and photocopy all pages, it's not unheard of that the "copies" of the packets have missing pages or pages that are out of order. The discrepancies in the objections filed against Jimenez, though, weren't just a matter of blank or upside-down pages showing up in copied packets. There were appendix recapitulation sheets that were numbered in the original packet but not in the "copies," and, more importantly, there were appendix recapitulation sheets that listed more objections in the original than its "copies."

Jimenez's campaign immediately suspect-

ed malfeasance at the state board to explain the discrepancy. Mondragon theorized the following narrative: maybe a representative for the objector—an Illinois Department of Human Services employee named Elizabeth Diaz-Castillo, who has appeared as an objector to Munoz's challengers in the past—delivered the original objection to the state board at the eleventh hour but realized that there weren't enough signature challenges. What if Diaz-Castillo asked a friendly clerk at the board to time-stamp the top sheet of their objection (which was filed 35 minutes before the deadline) but allow them to come back the next day to actually drop off a packet and copies with more challenges? Mondragon wondered whether an earlier version of the packet with fewer objections got mixed in with the final filed objection and its copies. This sort of corrupt dealing between a campaign worker and a state employee wouldn't be outside the realm of possibility in this town.

"I would note that State Board of Elections employees sign a nonpartisan political activity

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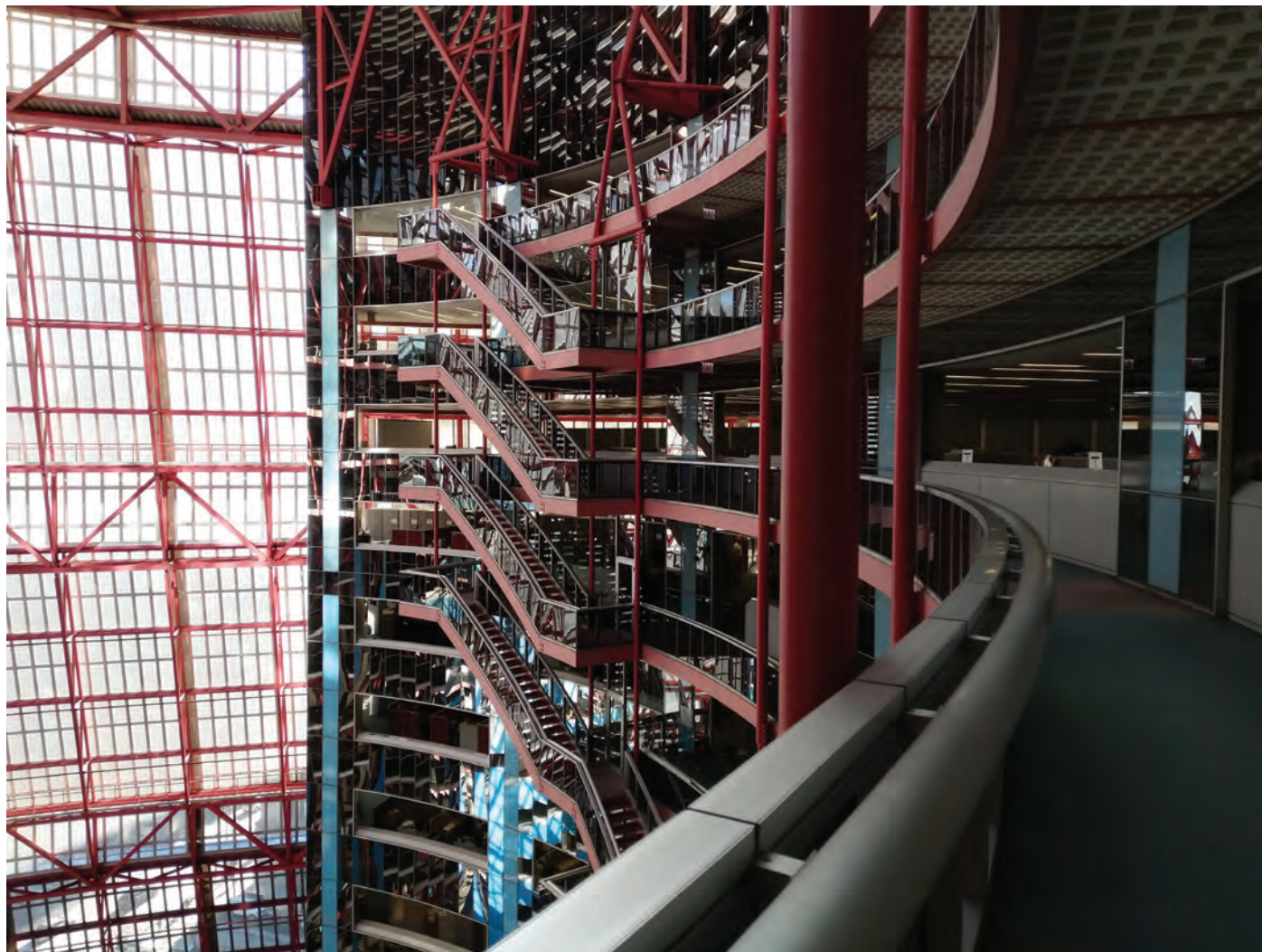
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The Illinois State Board of Elections has an outpost on the 14th floor of the James R. Thompson Center in the Loop. Objectors file their petitions to knock candidates off the ballot at the counter on the right.  MAYA DUKMASOVA FOR CHICAGO READER

waiver,” said Bernadette Matthews, assistant executive director of the State Board of Elections, after patiently listening to my presentation of this theory. “I’m not gonna comment on the likelihood [of Mondragon’s theory] but I’ll just say we receive what was filed. We receive the original and the two copies at the same time. When an original is received and time-stamped it’s along with the two copies that are then hand-stamped.”

People could say Matthews’s denial of an allegation of misconduct among her staff is expected. But there’s a simpler explanation for the objection discrepancies. (One that doesn’t beg the question of how Diaz-Castillo’s representative managed to strike a shady deal with a board of elections employee, in front of other

employees working the counter and many people waiting to file challenges to other candidates.) The objector’s team could have made an objection packet and produced the needed copies, but then realized they didn’t mark enough signature challenges to really be safe and decided to beef it up. The final objection was prepared, but the copies filed with it clearly belonged to an earlier, or incomplete, version. Given the mad rush to file on December 9, it’s possible that whoever dropped off the three packets to the state board either didn’t notice that the “copies” didn’t match the original or knew they didn’t have the right copies and still filed them anyway. The next morning a staffer from the Chicago Board of Elections picked up the original and one of the mismatched copies

while the other copy was scanned and stored by the state board, and this is how the divergent sets of objections entered the pipeline to reach Jimenez. Neither the state board nor the Chicago Board of Elections have the time nor resources to examine objection copies to make sure they match the original objection. Unless a candidate brings these issues up at a hearing, they fall by the wayside.

Asked about the discrepancies between the three packets, Diaz-Castillo’s attorney, Thomas Jaconetty, responded with an e-mailed statement, saying that the original objection now on file with the Chicago Board of Elections “is, in fact, identical in all respects, details, and particulars” to the objection he has in his own file. He didn’t offer any explanation for why the

three packets filed with the state board didn’t match one another. But another election attorney, Michael Dorf, said this type of paperwork screwup within an objector’s camp is very common. He vociferously defended the integrity of the State Board of Elections staff, too. “They’re good people and they are not partisan,” Dorf said. “It’s very unlikely that someone is involved in a conspiracy. I respect those people a great deal.”

Mondragon prepared a motion to bring up the discrepancy in the copies to the Chicago Board of Elections, but that became moot. Ultimately there weren’t enough valid objections even in Diaz-Castillo’s beefiest objection to knock Jimenez off the ballot. Still, Mondragon was perplexed by the discrepancy. “I hope it’s benign, but if it’s not it means there are people [working for the State Board of Elections] who are willing to look the other way to cheat,” he said. “It’s already a system that gives the upper hand to people who are incumbents and have resources.” Presented with the details of the benign scenario, Mondragon said the fact that this could happen at all “adds questions about the integrity of the system—whether it’s a quality control issue or a malfeasance issue.”

The state law that requires objectors to file an original and two copies was written in 1998. Mondragon wondered whether it wouldn’t be better to require objectors to file just one packet and have state officials make copies themselves, and bill the cost of copying back to the objector. But that would bring up a whole separate problem, according to election lawyer Andrew Finko. “There are constitutional restrictions on imposing costs in First Amendment situations,” he said. “Ballot access is all First Amendment. The legal fiction is that an objector is a voter who wants to assert their rights to challenge a nomination.” Even though the objector has to pay the cost of copying the objections anyway, “implementing legislation that shifts the cost would be difficult. It’s easier to have the objector handle [the copying] because that’s not direct money that they’re paying to the state.”

The bottom line, Finko added, agreeing with the spirit of Mondragon’s complaint, is that state election code is full of rules that help incumbents and hinder challengers. These rules are written by incumbents, after all. “The election code isn’t about access,” he said. “It’s about denial. There’s 101 ways to get you off the ballot. It’s an obstacle course. If you don’t know the process you’ll get sandbagged.” 

 @mdoukmas



The Black Creativity Innovation Studio © ARIONNE NETTLES

VISUAL ARTS

Black Creativity thrives in its 50th year

The legacy of the Museum of Science and Industry exhibition is built on cultural representation and innovation.

By ARIONNE NETTLES

Little superheroes dashed out of the Black Creativity Innovation Studio and through the Museum of Science and Industry on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, their capes blowing and badges glowing. On this museum family day, the studio was set up just for them. First they picked their superpowers, determined their origin stories, and chose an identity. And then, of course, next up was building their gear.

The “Hero Lab” was a collaboration with Jason Mayden, CEO and cofounder of the children’s shoe company Super Heroic and

one of this year’s honored Black Creativity innovators. He says he designed the activity to give kids a positive experience that lasts beyond the fun of the day—he wants kids to know their own abilities.

“A lot of kids who are coming here, they feel joy for a moment, but we want them to go home and have that joy be present in their everyday lives, so we wanted to give them something—an artifact of their heroism and their brilliance,” Mayden says. “By them constructing their own cape, picking their superpowers, it gives them agency and we give them labels that help them be biased towards

positive outcomes.”

Every year, MSI’s Black Creativity program creates experiences like the Hero Lab to expose youth to careers and opportunities in creative and STEM fields. Mayden, a former designer for Nike and the Jordan brand, is a native south-sider and sees the opportunity to participate in Black Creativity as a way to fill the void left by the lack of representation in these fields.

“By me being myself in these environments, it gives people permission to be themselves, and I think authenticity and access to authentic people is lacking in our community because we often are told we have to switch our behaviors, switch our style of speech or dress in order to be deemed as innovative or deemed as intelligent,” Mayden says. “But I think I’ve lived the life and have a career that reflects my true self. And if we can have kids feel like being who they are is enough, then that’s a blessing.”

MLK Day was the official kickoff of Black Creativity. Since 1970, the exhibit has drawn crowds to the museum to celebrate the culture, heritage, and contributions of African Americans in art and innovation. This year’s list of exhibits includes a timeline of that 50-year history, the Innovation Studio, and the “Juried Art Exhibition,” the longest-running exhibit of African-American art in the country.

Black Creativity started as the Black Es-thetics arts and culture festival with a focus on emerging artists and performances in theater, dance, and music. Publisher John H. Sengstacke, photographer Robert (Bobby) A. Sengstacke, fine arts editor Earl Calloway—all of the *Chicago Defender*—along with history professor and MSI trustee John Hope Franklin and South Side Community Art Center members such as artist Douglas R. Williams were influential in its creation. “Queen of Gospel” Mahalia Jackson performed at the inaugural event.

In 1984 the museum worked with the *Chicago Defender* and added science, technology, and history into the exhibition and changed its name to Black Creativity. It added a fund-raising gala, supported by Johnson Publishing Company founders Eunice and John Johnson, which was attended by Oprah.

And in 1988, MSI featured 100 Black scientists, engineers, and inventors in “Black Achievers in Science,” the museum’s first

large-scale exhibition.

“We added science and technology, but always kept the art,” says Angela Williams, deputy creative director at MSI. “And really, in a way, we were ahead of the curve in terms of a larger global thinking. Now, STEAM [science, technology, engineering, art, and math] is part of educational thinking in terms of what students need to be looking at towards the future.”

Williams took the lead on the “Black Creativity: 50 Years” exhibit, and says one of her favorite highlights was a 2007 exhibit called “Design for Life” that featured industrial designer Charles Harrison. Harrison was the chief of design at Sears, Roebuck and Company—the company’s first Black executive—and was responsible for redesigning the 3-D View-Master.

“He spent many, many years at Sears and lived right here in Chicago,” Williams says. “The bios [in the exhibit] are really hyper-focused on Chicago stories, and he’s one of those stories.”

Since its inception, Black Creativity has continued to champion established Black artists and innovators while launching the careers of those who are emerging. Artists such as Hebru Brantley, Harmonia Rosales, Theaster Gates, and Amanda Williams were featured in Black Creativity before their rise to wide acclaim. This year more than 200 works are displayed.

Blake Lenoir, an artist and cultural activist, has artwork featured for the first time this year. Lenoir, 28, says he was first exposed to art in museums during a visit to MSI and as a preteen worked there as a volunteer in the creative studio. Now, his mixed-media piece Opaque Metropolis sits on the same walls that would steal his attention.

“Just to be in that space and to see people’s reaction to my work, being from the south side and being able to represent my age group [shows] it’s attainable, and we can do things that are pretty great right now,” Lenoir says.

This year marks multidisciplinary artist Rory Scott’s third year participating in the exhibit. Her work often deals with space and time, so being part of the 50th anniversary exhibit has special meaning for her.

“I’m obsessed with time so it’s a big deal,” Scott says. “It means a lot to be a part of something that has been in existence and cultivated to thrive after all this time. I am incredibly

ARTS & CULTURE

happy and grateful that I get to celebrate and participate in this historic milestone show.”

In addition to works of art by professional artists, the Black Creativity program has extended its focus in recent years to specifically highlight the work of high school student artists. Last year it created a dedicated space for work in the youth category, and this year it modified its submission process to encourage entries from more students—in 2020, the youth exhibition is the largest it’s ever been.

Located upstairs with the Black Creativity logo projected on the wall of the stairwell, the exhibition’s youth gallery feels uniquely fresh and filled with cultural references. There are images of Black life, both current and historical, that line the dark gray walls.

Kenwood Academy High School’s Arthur Roby, whose portrait of rapper Young Thug earned him first place in the 2019 youth category, has portraits of two more rappers in this year’s exhibit—Lil Baby and the late Nipsey Hussle—along with a portrait titled *MLK Smile*, which on opening day prompted

a group of captivated kids to yell to their parents, “Hey, that’s Martin Luther King!”

Mackinzie Obamedo is a student at Walter H. Dyett High School for the Arts and a first-time participant in the show. Her entry, a digital photograph called *Goddess*, shows her carefully braiding hair, with perfect triangular parts. It’s an image that represents what Obamedo says is part of her legacy: she does hair, her mother does hair, her grandmother does hair, and it all happens in the family hair school, Your School of Beauty Culture, just a few miles away in Bronzeville. Braiding is her art.

“I think hair is very controversial because a lot of people think of it differently, especially Black hair,” Obamedo says. “I grew up in hair so I know a lot about it.”

Downstairs in the main gallery, families gathered near works of art that spanned the spectrum from oil on canvases to ceiling-to-floor-sized quilts. Josh and Dany Hightower brought their two sons, eight-year-old William and six-year-old Alex, from suburban

La Grange Park. After leaving the Innovation Studio, the brothers proudly showed off their capes and badges in the Juried Art space. Their trek into the city on MLK Day was intentional.

“I wanted some type of Black culture experience to show my children,” Josh Hightower says.

A highlight for the family was the intersection of art and innovation that Black Creativity provides. The kids loved the creative and hands-on experiences, and their parents loved the expansiveness of what they were learning.

“I wanted something where the kids could have fun and learn, but not know they’re learning,” Dany Hightower says. “And we want them to have extensive experience with different fields.”

The Hightowers’s experience is one that the museum carefully designed: recognizing the contributions of Black creatives in a way that’s accessible and relevant to young minds.

Dr. Rabiah Mayas has been the museum’s Davee Foundation vice president of education

and guest experience for about three months. As she works to shape the future of the Black Creativity program, she considers her own experience as a Black woman in science as an example.

“I remember often my own childhood,” Mayas says. “I grew up in the Washington, D.C., area and went to museums all the time and saw examples of African-American art and science. I know deeply how critical those moments were to my own exploration in the sciences and my ability to see myself as a scientific person.”

And now, Mayas vows to continue to cultivate experiences at MSI so that today’s Black kids can have that same ability.

“It’s an exciting opportunity,” Mayas says, “to highlight how creativity and curiosity, collaboration, critical thinking have pathways into the science as well as to the arts and that we make that connection real here through the Black Creativity experiences.” 

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Learning to Skateboard in a Warzone (If You're a Girl) 2020 SHORTSTV

also under its belt, *Learning to Skateboard in A Warzone (If You're a Girl)* explores a program known as Skateistan, which teaches young girls in Afghanistan to skateboard. Directed by Carol Dysinger and Elena Andreicheva, the film features adorable, spunky girls, a bad ass group of instructors, and a message of female empowerment, making for an uncritical and easily digestible portrait of war-torn Afghanistan.

Though multiple documentaries have been made about the sinking of the MV Sewol ferry in 2014, *In the Absence*, directed by Yi Seung-Jun and Gary Byung-Seok Kam, relies almost exclusively on actual footage and audio from the incident, creating an eerie and irrevocably damning effect. Bureaucratic cowardice, parents grieving their drowned children, and the desperately fought-for impeachment of

President Park Geun-hye meld together to tell a tale of tragedy and hard-won justice.

Finally, *Life Overtakes Me* (dir. John Haptas and Kristine Samuelson) offers a deep dive into an illness known as Resignation Syndrome, affecting hundreds of refugee children in Sweden, causing them to willingly fall into comatose sleep for periods as long as several years. In tracing the disease and the refugee families it afflicts, this documentary portrays an exacting appraisal of the suffering borne by asylum seekers, as transferred onto the prone and pristine forms of their innocent children. "Recovery is dependent on rebuilding hope," says a Swedish pediatrician in voiceover, which becomes a makeshift thesis for the film which, like the 2020 Oscar-nominated shorts in general, offers an unflinching perspective of the world while still holding on to some semblance of redemption. **A**

@nlcoomes

PREVIEW

Short films, big messages

The Oscar-Nominated Documentary Short Films program explores the ties that bind amid tragedy and struggle.

By NINA LI COOMES

In our modern world, the political, environmental, and social landscape often feels increasingly isolating. What, if anything, connects us to each other anymore? The 2020 Oscar-Nominated Documentary Short Films program attempts to address this question by telling stories about the ways in which we are interconnected across boundaries of kin, age, race, and nation through experiences of struggle, love, grief, and laughter.

St. Louis Superman, directed by Smriti Mundhra and Sami Khan, follows Bruce Franks Jr., a Black battle rapper and activist turned state representative for Missouri, on his quest to introduce a bill that would define youth violence as an epidemic in St. Louis, as well as to declare June 7 Christopher Harris Day in honor of his older brother lost to gun violence. Beyond politics, Franks Jr. is also father to a five-year-old boy named King, and

it is through the portrayal of this relationship that the film takes on a glowing, tender quality. The hushed croon of a father and son's voices mingling together in a shared song offer the audience a glimpse into just what the stakes of fighting racism and gun violence ought to be.

As the camera pans the dance studio in *Walk, Run, Cha-cha* (dir. Laura Nix), bodies bending and folding in flamingo-like grace, the story of Paul and Millie Cao unfolds. Refugees of the Vietnam War, the Caos endured years of separation and hardship before being reunited in the United States. The film focuses on their reunion and reclamation of joy via dance, paying homage to their journeys as refugees, but ultimately choosing to find its resonance in two dancers sliding gleefully across a dance floor.

With a Tribeca win and a BAFTA nomination

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Aurora

BEST OF THE 2010S

Ben Sachs's favorite movies of the decade

You might have missed some of the most groundbreaking and innovative films of the 2010s.

By **BEN SACHS**

As far as U.S. film culture is concerned, the 2010s were a polarizing decade. On the one hand, great movies were plentiful, and they came here from all over the world. Thanks to a multitude of DVD distributors and online streaming platforms, one could access worthwhile cinema with greater ease than ever before. On the other hand, a small handful of corporations dominated (and continue to dominate) theatrical distribution channels, making it difficult to see many of the era's truly important movies on a big screen unless you lived in a big city like Chicago. Even here, several movies on my list of favorites of the 2010s didn't play in the city outside of festivals, and one (Wang Bing's monumental documentary *Dead Souls*) still hasn't screened here at all.

The Internet played a big role in this polarization and probably accelerated it as well. As

I mentioned, one can find all sorts of movies online, not to mention writing on what seems like all of them. Yet the dominant U.S.-based voices in online film discourse tend not to champion alternatives to multiplex fare, but rather focus on whatever's most popular in any given week. As such it feels like mainstream movies and art movies are barely on speaking terms anymore; and as for U.S. cinema and that of the rest of the world, the two may as well be coming from different planets, to judge by most of our nation's cinematic output. One reason why U.S. filmmaking was so fertile in the 1960s and '70s was because American filmmakers were responding to, and sometimes assimilating, the innovations of such directors as Jean-Luc Godard, Michelangelo Antonioni, Alain Resnais, Akira Kurosawa, and Ingmar Bergman. Are there any Americans now trying to find local analogues to the work of Apichat-

pong Weerasethakul, Bertrand Bonello, Miguel Gomes, Lucrecia Martel, or Jafar Panahi, to name some of the most important directors working today? The cinema of the United States is pretty much stagnant at the dawn of the 2020s, and the Internet, which might help to stir things up, largely seems content with keeping them still.

This isn't to say the U.S. failed to produce good or even great movies in the past decade. We got at least one important film from Kelly Reichardt, Richard Linklater, Nathaniel Dorsky, Jim Jarmusch, Lewis Klahr, Steven Soderbergh, Ben Russell, David Fincher, Robert Greene, Janie Geiser, Alex Ross Perry, Martin Scorsese, Sean Baker, Terrence Malick, Jesse McLean, and James Gray. Yet outside the experimental world, how often did it feel as though these filmmakers were working in concert or pushing the national cinema towards

something new? The major American films of the last ten years seemed to exist in isolation from one another, and the minor ones (which would include most multiplex fare) generally stunk.

Regardless of whether this country's culture of stagnation gives way to something more vibrant, I feel confident that cinema as a whole will continue to evolve in exciting ways. The past decade offered so many valuable films and film movements that I often had difficulty keeping up with them all. Still, the trends that reached my attention were more than enough to inspire gratitude. To name some highlights: there were the four masterpieces that Hong Kong producer-director-studio chief Johnnie To released between 2011 and 2012 (*Don't Go Breaking My Heart*, *Life Without Principle*, *Romancing in Thin Air*, and *Drug War*), miraculous films that delivered personal art within popular idioms; the continued rise of female auteurs all over Latin and South America; the wave of groundbreaking documentaries from mainland China, which were as thematically provocative as they were formally provocative; Panahi's series of self-reflexive films, made in defiance of the Iranian government's ban on his making movies; the final features by such giants as Resnais, Manoel de Oliveira, Agnès Varda, Tsai Ming-liang, and Abbas Kiarostami; and French auteur Bruno Dumont's unlikely transformation from a dour Bressonian to a maker of madcap comedies.

In selecting my favorite films of the 2010s, I considered those I think most likely to endure. Some of them, like *Fish & Cat* and *Sunset*, broke new ground in terms of cinematic expression, innovating ways to develop narratives or settings. Others, like *Life Without Principle* and *Rambleras*, tapped into an aesthetic classicism that, to quote Eric Rohmer, can be ahead of modernism—they point to formal traditions that take us out of the present and bind us to a sense of timelessness. (Ironically both *Principle* and *Rambleras* are extremely pressing in their social concerns, demonstrating that classicism doesn't have to be retrograde in its themes.) Either way I think that time will be generous to these movies. I've seen all but one of them multiple times, and I find new things to admire about each whenever I return to them. Some of these titles aren't well-known in this country yet, but I consider this to be only a temporary issue. Great art has a way of reaching wider audiences over

time, a process that the Internet can certainly facilitate.

Below are my favorite films of the decade, in order of preference.

1. **Life Without Principle** (Johnnie To, 2011) To's best movies validate cinema as the supreme popular art form, and this fuguelike narrative about the investment banking industry was the best of the best. Every sequence of this unclassifiable film (which blends comedy, suspense, and melodrama) is a masterpiece, as To employs breath-taking camera movements, wondrous color combinations, and deeply felt performances to attain the heights of creative expression. It's so entertaining that you may not recognize its profound moral orientation until after you see it.

2. **Toni Erdmann** (Maren Ade, 2016) Like *Life Without Principle*, Ade's epic comedy asked us to consider how we preserve our humanity within the amoral workings of late capitalism. This German feature delivered the decade's richest characterizations, and its narrative structure was ingenious as well. Ade carefully establishes a realist logic for the movie's first hour, then dashes it with riotous screwball humor. It's a perfect metaphor for the needed eruption of human kindness from within a system that forces us to suppress it.

3. **Fish & Cat** (Shahram Mokri, 2013) Riffing on *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and the art of M.C. Escher, Iranian writer-director Mokri devised the most impressive formal achievement of the 2010s. His film is an unbroken 130-minute shot that doesn't preserve our notions of "real time," presenting flashbacks, flash-forwards, and dream sequences. Multiple viewings reveal this to be a surprisingly humane work as well as a fiercely intelligent one.

4. Tie: **'Til Madness Do Us Part** (Wang Bing, 2013), **Bitter Money** (Wang, 2016), and **Dead Souls** (Wang, 2018) These three features confirmed that China's Wang Bing is the most fearless documentarian working today. *Madness* took viewers on an unforgettable visit to a mental institution-cum-prison; *Money* delivered a panoramic look of personal and professional discontents in a small industrial city; and *Souls*, the only documentary I've seen comparable to Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*, was a mammoth history lesson about survivors of Mao's anti-rightist campaign of the late 1950s. Wang employed a different aesthetic for each film, tailoring his approach to specific social concerns he wanted to address.

5. **Inherent Vice** (Paul Thomas Anderson, 2014) One of the finest literary adaptations in cinema, Anderson's faithful translation of a minor Thomas Pynchon novel managed to convey the richness of Pynchon's trailblazing fiction as a whole. The film is a frightening investigation into the death of 60s counterculture; it's

also a laugh riot. No other film this decade made me laugh more.

6. Tie: **In Another Country** (Hong Sang-soo, 2012) and **Nobody's Daughter Haewon** (Hong, 2013) The prolific South Korean writer-director Hong is the cinema's great chronicler of passive-aggression and romantic frustration, and these two features spoke to his consistency as well as his range. Both are inspired dream narratives grounded in deceptively simple (but exactly composed) imagery, yet *Country* is a sunny comedy and *Haewon* is a tragic melodrama. I hope we get another 14 features from Hong in the 2020s.

7. **Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives** (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2010) Weerasethakul delivered the ultimate work of spiritual filmmaking this decade with this funny, moving, and haunting account of an old farmer's death and reincarnation. Despite the heaviness of his concerns, the imaginative Thai writer-director still found room for talking animals, sex jokes, and glorious pop music. The film's playfulness belied a deep sense of wonder.

8. **Sunset** (Laszlo Nemes, 2018) *Son of Saul* was the decade's best debut film, and with this second feature, Hungarian director Nemes managed to top it. A historical inquiry on par with those of Roberto Rossellini and Hou Hsiao-Hsien, this utilized a novel aesthetic to immerse viewers in the social turmoil leading up to World War I. No other director has made more purposeful use of shallow focus—one feels lost in Nemes's films, which is precisely their point.

9. **Ramblers** (Daniela Speranza, 2013) The best film I've ever seen at the Chicago Latino Film Festival, this life-affirming Uruguayan comedy meditated on problems that women face in youth, middle age, and old age without feeling sour or programmatic. It's the rare movie that asks us to consider the whole of life, though it approaches the subject with tremendous modesty and good cheer. The cinema needs Speranza, who works wonders with color and Super 16-millimeter cinematography, to make another movie.

10. **Aurora** (Cristi Puiu, 2010) The most divisive film of the Romanian New Wave was also the most rigorous piece of durational cinema since Chantal Akerman's *Jeanne Dielman*. A pitch-black comedy about random violence and broken families, Puiu's three-hour tour de force pushed the New Wave's much-lauded, hyperrealist aesthetic into intractable strangeness and unaccountable wonder.

11. Tie: **Film Socialisme** (Jean-Luc Godard, 2010), **Goodbye to Language** (Godard, 2014), and **The Image Book** (Godard, 2018) Cinema's greatest poet spent his ninth decade making some of his most youthful films, explor-

ing new ways to express himself and comment on the state of the world. *Goodbye to Language*, Godard's rapturous 3-D experiment, was the most spectacular of these three features, but all were inexhaustible sound-and-image collages that gave pleasure to the senses as well as the mind.

12. **Zama** (Lucrecia Martel, 2017) The first feature in nine years by Argentina's best director was the decade's most welcome comeback. A haunting comedy of patriarchal and colonial power in crisis, Martel's adaptation of Antonio di Benedetto's 1956 novel exhibited the director's genius for visual composition (aided, as always, by her skillful manipulation of offscreen sound) in every shot.

13. **All Watched Over By Machines of Loving Grace** (Adam Curtis, 2011) This three-part BBC documentary was, like Godard's recent output, a heady meditation on the travails of life in the Information Age. It also provided a number of invaluable history lessons; Curtis explained how our civilization arrived at its current condition and asked us to ruminate on the mistakes we made along the way.

14. **Nocturama** (Bertrand Bonello, 2016) The singular French writer-director Bonello made great strides this decade with *House of Pleasures* and *Saint Laurent*, but this creepy fable about 21st-century terrorism was, for me, his finest achievement. A sustained nightmare of a film, *Nocturama* was also a brilliant piece of film criticism, finding common ground between such dissimilar reference points as David Cronenberg, Robert Bresson, and *Dawn of the Dead*.

15. **Computer Chess** (Andrew Bujalski, 2013) Another Internet Age origin story, Bujalski's formally adventurous comedy (shot in black-and-white on vintage analogue video cameras) posited that the world we live in today grew out of the failed social interactions of Carter-era tech nerds. It's hilarious to watch and disturbing to think about.

16. **Sack Barrow** (Ben Rivers, 2011) My favorite experimental short of the 2010s was British director-cine-matographer Rivers's 20-minute documentary about a run-down electroplating factory. This was both a moving elegy for a dying way of life and an eerie piece of found science fiction, with images of industrial decay reminiscent of Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker*.

17. **The Wind Rises** (Hayao Miyazaki, 2013) Miyazaki's gorgeous animated biopic of aviation engineer Jiro Horikoshi (who designed fighter planes for the Japanese military during World War II) makes me cry whenever I watch it, even though I know full well that it's asking me to empathize with a monster. A moral provocation of the highest order.

18. **Goodbye First Love** (Mia Hansen-Løve, 2011) French writer-director Hansen-Løve found new ways to convey time's passing in her exquisitely subtle dramas, which include *The Father of My Children*, *Eden*, and this heartbreaking saga of teenage love and its aftermath. The film spans more than a decade but seems to go by in an instant.

19. **At Berkeley** (Frederick Wiseman, 2013) An alternately stirring and agonizing epic by America's greatest documentarian, Wiseman's four-hour look at UC Berkeley in 2010 was also the cinema's most thorough consideration of how our society was irrevocably changed by the George W. Bush era.

20. **Hard to Be a God** (Aleksei German, 2013) German, one of the most important Russian filmmakers, spent a decade working on this pulverizing sci-fi art film, which turned out to be his last work. An immersive portrait of societal decay, this featured immaculate sound and production design and some of the most forgettably hideous imagery in movie history. 

For more of Ben Sachs's favorite films of the decade go to chicagoreader.com/movies





FEBRUARY LINEUP

Filmmaker appearances, events & more!

Oscar nominee **PARASITE** • Jan. 31 - Feb. 6

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

FANTASTIC FUNGI • Jan. 31 - Feb. 6

Almódovar's **PAIN & GLORY** • Jan. 31 - Feb. 6

FLEABAG • Feb. 8, 12, 17, 27

NEW RELEASES

Shia LeBeouf in **HONEY BOY** • Feb. 7 - 13

JOSÉ • Feb. 7 - 13

COME AS YOU ARE • Feb. 14 - 20

New restoration! **CANE RIVER** • Feb. 14 - 20

GOLDIE • Feb. 21 - 27

THE TIMES OF BILL CUNNINGHAM • Feb.

28 - March 12

BEANPOLE • Feb. 28 - March 5

I WAS AT HOME, BUT... • Feb. 28 - March 5

PATRICIO GUZMÁN TRILOGY

THE CORDILLERA OF DREAMS • Feb. 21 - 27

NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT • Feb. 21, 22, 24

THE PEARL BUTTON • Feb. 22, 26

SERIES/FESTIVALS

FROM ASIA WITH LOVE • Jan. 24 - May 5

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RR Groundhog Day

Bill Murray plays an obnoxious TV weatherman from Pittsburgh forced to relive the same wintry day in a small Pennsylvania town over and over again until he gets it right, in an unexpectedly graceful and well-organized comedy (1993) directed and cowritten by Harold Ramis. While the movie's underlying message is basically *A Christmas Carol* strained through *It's a Wonderful Life*—hardly a recommendation in my book—the filmmakers mercifully spare us the speeches and simply demonstrate their thesis; as they do they reveal their true virtue: a fluid sense of narrative that works the story's theme-and-variations idea with a glancing and gliding touch. Considering that none of the characters is fresh or interesting, it's a commendable achievement that the quality of the storytelling alone keeps the movie watchable and likable.

—JONATHAN ROSENBAUM PG, 103 min. Sun 2/2, 9 PM. Logan Theatre. Also Wed 2/5, 7 PM. Music Box Theatre

The Hole

Malaysian director Tsai Ming-liang created this 1998 film for the French TV anthology "2000 Seen By," which broadcast a 69-minute version titled *Last Dance*; running 95 minutes, *The Hole* is the version Tsai prefers, though the film is well worth seeing in any form. Wryly postapocalyptic and gorgeously shot and framed, this present-day SF story charts the effects of an epidemic on a Taipei man and the woman who lives in the apartment directly below his. After the rest of the building has been vacated, a plumber drills a hole in the man's floor and neglects to fill it up again. Periodically the man or the woman or both break into full-scale musical numbers that re-create Hong Kong musicals of the 50s; the rest of the time, they're wrestling with the same sort of urban angst and alienation that often consumes Tsai's characters. I like all of his films, but this one has given me the most pleasure. In Japanese with subtitles. —J.R. JONES Fri 1/31, 7 PM and Sun 2/2, 1:30 PM. Doc Films

The Rhythm Section

There are two things that spy films should never be: predictable and boring. Unfortunately, Reed Morano's *The Rhythm Section* is a muddled display of both cardinal sins. Based on the novel of the same name by Mark Burnell, the film tells the story of Stephanie (Blake Lively),

who self destructs in the aftermath of her family's death in a horrific plane crash. When she discovers the accident may not have been an accident after all, she gets swept up in a world of crime she never could have prepared for. It's not a bad film, per se, but there's not much to rally behind. It's not as fun and ridiculously explosion-reliant as blockbuster action flicks, but it's not emotionally compelling enough to be taken seriously as a drama, either. Lively is a clear standout—almost unrecognizable and giving an intense performance unlike anything she's done in recent years—and her rapport with Jude Law works often enough to be convincing. And if you loved Lively's frequent and fantastic wardrobe changes in *A Simple Favor*, you'll at least appreciate the wide array of wigs and disguises she sports in *The Rhythm Section*. —CODY CORRALL R, 109 min. Now playing in wide release

The Turning

"Have you gone mad?" a grizzled caretaker asks flustered tutor Kate (Mackenzie Davis) after a series of increasingly unhinged outbursts. Kate never answers, and neither does the movie, leaving it up to the audience to untangle the mysterious mess strewn out before them. For those not endeared to *The Turning's* source material, Henry James's novella *The Turn of the Screw*, it's a big ask, and one most movie-goers will decline to oblige. It's a shame given the movie has enough instant charm to pull viewers into its maze. Director Floria Sigismondi's (*The Runaways*) second feature-length offering seems promising, from Davis and Brooklyn Prince's (*The Florida Project*) naturally inviting performances to the uniquely reimagined 90s soundtrack juxtaposed against striking gothic imagery. Unfortunately, a bevy of offscreen characters that only serve to complicate an already meandering plot and a sorely muddled ending rob it of its full potential. —BECCA JAMES PG-13, 94 min. Now playing in wide release

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THEATER



I Hunger for You ■ JIM COLEMAN

DANCE PREVIEW

Body of faith

Kimberly Bartosik's *I Hunger for You* draws on her early experiences with charismatic spirituality.

By IRENE HSIAO

In 2017, when choreographer and former Merce Cunningham dancer Kimberly Bartosik began working on *I Hunger for You*, her evening-length work on faith inspired by early personal experiences with charismatic spirituality, the country's deep division following the most recent presidential election

I HUNGER FOR YOU

Thu 1/30-Sat 2/1, 7:30 PM, Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago, 1306 S. Michigan, 312-369-8330, dance.colum.edu, \$30, \$24 seniors, \$10 students.

was a fresh wound in her mind. "I was, like many people in this country, in a state of distress about how we had gotten to a place where we couldn't speak to somebody who did not share our values—our life values, not just

our religious values. I come from North Carolina, and I come from a family [where] half of us voted one way, half the other way. I needed to question why I was making work at all. Why was I in the studio making dances when I felt the world was in a place of real distress?"

Bartosik brought these questions directly into her artistic practice. "One thing I started thinking about was the conflation between religious practice and political belief systems. It was right in front of me with my family. I was thinking about one's moral compass and religious practice and the values of compassion and giving and life in the Christian faith and how there was so much I was seeing that wasn't that. [*I Hunger for You*] was never about charismatic spirituality—but I grew up in a charismatic household, and I used to go to evangelical services and, even as a ➔

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THEATER

continued from 17

young girl, I couldn't figure out how people could believe in something so strongly that their body actually changed. Their body went into a different state. As a physical practitioner and an artist using my body I started from that place: How can you believe in something so deeply that your body goes into a radical state of being?"

Bartosik adds, "I knew that at the services I went to growing up people were not taking drugs or altering their bodies through any substance but their pure belief. And it's something that I am in awe of. I used that as a humbling starting point to get beyond my own criticism, which was political and social and full of rage, and started looking at the body in different states. How can we think about the body being an ideology beneath its belief system, a body in terms of its own existence and its blood and its flesh and its breath and its sweat and the things that just make us human and our desire to believe and our desire to have faith?" Beginning with these intensely personal questions on national conflict, the two-year process fixated on one essential question: "Where in the body is the desire to believe in something outside oneself, be it a god or a life?"

Although her experiences in the church are now distant, Bartosik retains vivid memories of bodies phenomenally altered by faith. "You don't ever forget watching a body be just a regular body and then go through stages of change, speaking in tongues, and finally [falling] to the ground, what a charismatic

producer would call 'being slain in the spirit.' They go through that experience and emerge back into their regular state, and they feel a certain freedom from the weight of whatever darkness or guilt they have been carrying. I think it's so beyond performance. I've not experienced it in my own body. I've only witnessed it."

The memory resulted in the development of a major motif in the work, created with her company, Kimberly Bartosik/daela. "We were on a residency. It was night. I said, 'Go outside in the night and put on your headphones and listen to a song that you can get lost in.' We all went in different directions into the forest." When the dancers returned, Bartosik prompted them to recreate the experience as a consuming pulse, "a deep thing in their body that moved them." They built dance using the pulse as an energetic counterpoint to extreme virtuosity. "I think there's something deep about watching these extraordinary performers navigate places of ultra control and ultra abandon."

Yet faith for Bartosik is something far more ordinary. "Dancing is a pure act of faith. You get up in the morning and have faith that your body is going to do what you ask it to do. You have faith that somebody is going to connect to your work. You have faith that you'll learn from it and have a chance to make something after. To me, every step is an act of faith in concrete and energetic powers that are beyond me." ■

🐦 @IreneCHsiao



VERBÖTEN

Through 3/8: Thu-Fri 8 PM, Sat 3 and 8 PM, Sun 3 PM, Chopin Theatre, 1543 W. Division, 773-769-3832, thehousetheatre.com, \$30-\$50, \$20 student and industry, available same day (pending availability).

THEATER



Verböten MICHAEL BROSILOW

therapy. At this point in *Verböten*'s life, there's nothing about Jason and his bandmates that can support a full musical. Their issues are prosaic: They roll their eyes at the parents they think are clueless. They wish they were older. There is an attempt to bring domestic violence into the plot, but it's so out of left field that it feels contrived, a manipulative attempt to gin up a crisis just before intermission, not because that's where the story leads, but because musicals generally need to have a crisis right before intermission.

As it follows bandmates Jason, Zack (Jeff Kurysz), Tracey (Krystal Ortiz), and Chris (Matthew Lunt), *Verböten* shows how music provides an outlet and a sense of belonging for teens struggling to find their places in the world. The problem is their behind-the-music struggles. If you're going to write about yourself, you need a ruthless editor to tell you when you're boring and navel-gazing. That's missing here. Watching *Verböten* is akin to reading somebody else's teenage diary. There's a lot of het-up Sturm Und Drang, but none of it is as interesting or momentous as the author thinks.

The score deserves another pass. The numbers that bookend the piece are extraordinary. The others, not so much. Percussively, they tend to sound similar. Finally, Allen has his cast emoting at an 11 throughout. That's impressive in terms of sheer stamina, but it makes for a static production. If tooth-gnashing and big, screaming feels are the default, they lose their intensity and their urgency.

Verböten could be great. But first, it needs significant fine-tuning.

@CateySullivan

REVIEW

Teenage wasteland

Verböten is a 1980s punk musical that feels more like an after-school special.

By CATEY SULLIVAN

The opening tune Jason Narducy penned for his autobiographically inspired musical about a teen punk band in 1983 is a stunner. "New Song" is up there with *Fiddler's* "Tradition!" or *A Chorus Line*'s "I Hope I Get

It." Performed by Narducy's onstage alter ego Kieran McCabe, the number is simply astonishing, a song with the power to light up your heart and send you scrambling for your lighter (because before cell phones, we used

actual fire to urge musicians on to an encore). *Verböten* also ends with a mighty noise. When the titular high school punk band unleashes "Goodnight," a flood of pure joy and unstoppable adrenaline overtakes the theater. Directed by Nathan Allen, *Verböten* has great potential.

In between the opener and the finale, however, that potential is squandered by a book, written by Brett Neveu, sodden with self-indulgence, underwritten characters, and cringeworthy dialogue that often sounds like a particularly overwrought after-school special.

Neveu's book needs to be scrapped until someone can come up with a plot that doesn't feel like an elaborate exercise in vanity and/or



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REVIEW

Sad songs say so much

Isaac Gomez's *The Leopard Play, or Sad Songs for Lost Boys* digs the real American dirt.

By **KERRY REID**

If you're in the mood for some serious decolonizing after the Jeanine Cummins *American Dirt* backlash, Isaac Gomez has you covered. In *The Leopard Play, or Sad Songs for Lost Boys*, now in a blistering and poignant world premiere at Steep under Laura Alcalá Baker's direction, Gomez returns to his own roots in El Paso—a border city that not only reflects the many cracks and divisions running through our national identity right now, but that is also internalized by the character identified as “Son.”

The middle child in a family of Mexican American men, Son (Brandon Rivera) is gay, lives in Chicago, and has seldom returned to El Paso since graduating high school. Even

RR THE LEOPARD PLAY, OR SAD SONGS FOR LOST BOYS
Through 2/29: Thu-Sat 8 PM, Sun 3 PM, Steep Theatre, 1115 W. Berwyn, 312-458-0722, steeptheatre.com, \$39 reserved, \$27 general admission, \$10 access (“students, artists, whomever”).

his younger brother (Juan Muñoz), a college student in Oregon who is also gay, can't count on Son returning his phone calls. But when Dad (Victor Marañá), whose nickname is “Leopard,” requests a homecoming to honor the ten-year anniversary of his own brother's death, Son grudgingly complies.

Mom is absent working long hours at a Walmart (not the one where a white supremacist massacred 22 people this past August, though that horror is mentioned and Gomez's mother does work at an El Paso Walmart). Dad works odd jobs. Dad's two other surviving brothers (and Son's own oldest brother) spend most of their time tossing back Coors, belting along to Elton John (“Rocket Man” has particular meaning to them), and studiously avoiding speaking the truth about what

really happened to their fallen sibling.

Through flashbacks, we get a fragmented but sharp portrait of how Son's attempts to avoid the violence and lies that seem to define the men in his family have left him divided and distrustful of others and of his own desires. His interactions with a former lover (Alec Coles Perez) offer some respite from the fractious men at home, but also force him to confront how much of himself he's kept away from those who love him.

I won't pretend to know how much of Gomez's story comes directly from his own life. But what he's crafted here is a story that demands that we, as well as Son, begin seeing the men in this play as more than embodiments of toxic masculinity. These are men who are capable of great sacrifice in the face of their own fears.

There is harshness and anguish, but also wit, empathy, and beauty woven throughout Gomez's script, which won't be a surprise to anyone who saw *La Ruta*, his play about the missing and murdered women of Ciudad Juárez (right across the border from El Paso). The central message—you can't outrun your family forever, and sooner or later you have to wrestle that shit to the ground—is certainly a, well, familiar one, covered by everyone from Eugene O'Neill to Sam Shepard. The story comes together here more in bits and glimpses, with big revelations and smaller realizations sometimes awkwardly woven together (which is, let's face it, the way life unfolds in everything but conventional “well-made plays”). But the ensemble commits to all of it with such rawness and vulnerability that *The Leopard Play* is hard to shake off after leaving the theater. **R**

@KerryReid



PERFORMING ARTS PICKS

Find your heart's desire onstage in February

Or, breaking the curse of the groundhog.

By **IRENE HSIAO, KERRY REID, AND BRIANNA WELLEN**

THEATER (KERRY REID)

Sophisticated Ladies

You can take the red line instead of the A train to Porchlight's salute to Duke Ellington, a revival of a 1981 Tony-winning musical revue stuffed with

Ellington classics such as “Perdido,” “It Don't Mean a Thing,” and “Hit Me With a Hot Note and Watch Me Bounce.” Brenda Didier and Florence Walker Harris codirect and choreograph a cast of 15, with Jermaine Hill serving as music director. [Ruth Page Center for the Arts, through 3/6, porchlightmusictheatre.org.](http://RuthPageCenterfortheArts.org)

THEATER

Wild Terrain  COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

How to Defend Yourself

After one of their “sisters” is raped, a group of sorority women band together in a self-defense course, which forces them to confront the deepest strains of rage, trauma, rape culture—and their own desires. Victory Gardens developed Liliana Padilla’s script through the Ignition Festival, and Marti Lyons directs the co-world premiere in association with Actors Theatre of Louisville. [Victory Gardens Theater, through 2/23, victorygardens.org](#).

The Boys in the Band

After enjoying huge success with their immersive production of *Southern Gothic*, Windy City Playhouse returns to the winning formula of turning their audience into flies on the wall at a fraught social gathering. Carl Menninger directs Mart Crowley’s landmark (and controversial) 1968 play about nine gay men at a birthday party where secrets about themselves pour out along with the booze. However, unlike *Southern Gothic*, the audience, though seated in the apartment set, won’t be moving from room to room. [Windy City Playhouse, through 4/19, windycityplayhouse.com](#).

Roan @ The Gates

A civil rights attorney and her wife, an analyst for the National Security Agency, find their personal lives in conflict with murkier agendas in Christina Telesca Gorman’s play. Lexi Saunders directs for American Blues Theater. [Stage 773, 1/31-2/29, americanbluestheater.com](#).

Middle Passage

Lifeline artistic director Ilesa Duncan and David Barr III collaborated on this adaptation (directed by Duncan) of Charles Johnson’s novel, which won the 1990 National Book Award. First staged in a rollicking production with Pegasus Theatre Chicago in 2016 under the title *Rutherford’s Travels*, the picaresque tale follows Rutherford Calhoun, a newly freed slave from Illinois who tries to escape a forced marriage by hopping on an outbound ship—which turns out to be a slaving vessel headed for Africa. [Lifeline Theatre, 2/14-4/5, lifelinetheatre.com](#).

DANCE (IRENE HSIAO)

Wild Terrain

Same Planet Performance Project premieres two new works that contemplate our troubled relationship with the wilderness, literally and figuratively. In *Ammonite*, named for spiral-shelled mollusks that went extinct with the dinosaurs, New York-based guest choreo-

grapher Ivy Baldwin reenacts the destruction of the natural world. *Bad Bunny*, by SPPP artistic director Joanna Read, places dancers in a forest of artificial trees to reflect on the thorny issue of consent, boundaries, permission, and the word “yes.” [2/21-2/22, 7:30 PM, Dance Center of Columbia College, dance.colum.edu](#).

Legalize Menstruation

Whether it’s shark week, Aunt Flo’s turn to call, or Satan has let the sacrificial waterfall gush from the cursed abyss of hell, Loud Bodies Dance and the Chicago Period Project partner to put some punctuation on the month of February with a program that combines hip-hop, contemporary, social dance, and comedy in *Legalize Menstruation*. Top considerations for this dance collective committed to social justice include overcoming the taboo around Mother Nature’s gift and considering that not all who surf the red tide identify as women. Audience members are invited to contribute menstrual hygiene products to be given to homeless and in-need residents of our city. [2/29, 7:30 PM and 3/1, 5 PM, Preston Bradley Center, loudbodiesdance.com](#).

COMEDY (BRIANNA WELLEN)

Rap Transit: The L

Evelyn Troutman and Sukhjot Singh debut their new show that pits stand-ups against each other during head-to-head comedy rap battles. Local producers provide professional beats and the night closes out with a set from Groovebox. A portion of the proceeds will benefit GlobalGiving’s wildfire relief fund. [2/7, 8 PM, Cards Against Humanity, 1551 W. Homer, facebook.com/raptransit, \\$5](#).

The Chicago Puntathlon

Start working out your wordplay because anyone can be a contestant in this pun competition. Winners are determined by celebrity guest judges and audience applause, and the top punner walks away with \$100. [2/10, 8 PM, Call Bar, 1547 W. Bryn Mawr, facebook.com/thechicagopuntathlon, \\$15, \\$10 in advance](#).

Tim and Eric: 2020 Mandatory Attendance World Tour

The infamous comedy duo bring their unique brand of goofs to town (plus unnamed special guests!) for what is sure to be a perfectly bizarre live performance to fill that Awesome Show-shaped hole in your heart. [2/22, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre, 175 N. State, msg.com/the-chicago-theatre, \\$47.50](#). 





The Adult in the Room 📍 MICHAEL BROSILOW

OPENING

Adulthood, D.C. style

A one-woman show offers an incomplete portrait of Nancy Pelosi.

Nancy Pelosi is having her moment. From her literal clapback at President Trump to her dogged and confident management of the impeachment process, she has solidified her position in history as a groundbreaking political leader and feminist. *The Adult in the Room*, a Broadway Factor NYC world premiere penned by Bill McMahon and directed by Heather Arnson and Conor Bagley, fails to do such a storied career and complex personality justice.

Veteran stage and screen actress Orlagh Cassidy certainly has the chops to carry a one-woman show, and her plastic smiles and sly smirks are some of the only authentic glimpses this 75-minute production offers into Pelosi's quirks and character. The show's premise: Pelosi is holding an Instagram Live for a delegation from Running Start, a program that helps young women run for office. Be warned that there's reading involved, as the participants' questions aren't verbalized, but appear on screens on both sides of the stage. Throughout the Q&A, Pelosi waxes poetic on her parents, her biography, and her political leanings. The telling feels very

surface level and frustratingly boring, with little effort at self-analysis or introspection.

Pelosi describes herself as "the iron fist in the velvet glove," but her fist doesn't show itself until the final 15 minutes, when the plot shifts to the impeachment process. Perhaps the Speaker's story could be better told with a larger cast—hints at her relationship to "The Squad" (Representatives Ocasio-Cortez, Omar, Pressley, and Tlaib) could be worth exploring, as could more backroom interaction with her favorite sparring partner, the president. —**MARISSA OBERLANDER** *THE ADULT IN THE ROOM* Through 2/15: Tue-Fri 8 PM, Sat 2 and 8 PM, Sun 2 and 5 PM, Victory Gardens Richard Christiansen Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln, 773-871-3000, victorygardens.org, \$49.

RR What's the word?
Marriott's *Grease* defies expectations.

It is hard not to have low expectations for yet another revival of Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey's 1971 parody of/homage to late 1950s working-class youth culture and pre-Beatles American rock and roll. The show, a staple of community theaters and high school drama clubs, is packed with memorable mid-century American teen stereotypes (the bad girl, the greaser boy,

the Sandra Dee wannabe) and lots of Top 40 radio knockoffs ("Summer Nights," "Greased Lightning," "We Go Together") that get stuck in your head after even lackluster productions (or a third, or fifth, or tenth viewing of the blockbuster 1978 John Travolta-Olivia Newton-John vehicle).

But the Marriott production, under the direction of Scott Weinstein, defies expectations. The casting is superb and the performances outstanding, with Jimmy Nicholas and Leryn Turlington giving Travolta and Newton-John a run for their money as Danny Zuko and Sandy Dumbrowski. The staging—on Marriott's intimate, but limited, in-the-round space—is clever and constantly eye-pleasing. Weinstein and his team heighten everything that is great about this show, most particularly the score (Jacquelyne Jones as bad-girl Rizzo belts out a version of "There are Worse Things I Could Do" to die for), and make even the weaker elements in the show (for example, the show's almost-not-there plot) strong enough to sustain interest.

Weinstein's secret weapon is his ensemble, who constantly find new ways to play familiar characters. Michelle Lauto reveals the fire in Marty, a secondary character usually overshadowed by the more drama-filled girls in her squad (Sandy, Rizzo, and Frenchy). This is a production to knock all those memories of second-rate high school theatrical revivals out of your

head. —**JACK HELBIG** *GREASE* Through 3/15: Wed 1 and 7:30 PM, Thu 7:30 PM, Fri 8 PM, Sat 4 and 8 PM, Sun 1 and 5 PM; Wed 2/26-3/11, 1 PM only, Marriott Theatre, 10 Marriott Dr., Lincolnshire, 847-634-0200, marriotttheatre.com, \$55-\$60.

Not all there

Parallel but shallow storylines run through *If/Then*.

Performing a show specifically written for powerhouse Idina Menzel without Idina Menzel starts you off at a disadvantage. When that musical is also superficial and predictable, it's no surprise that Elyse Dolan's staging of *If/Then* for Brown Paper Box. Co. could not deliver.

The story follows Elizabeth (Amanda Giles) as she lives different versions of her life. In two parallel plots, *If/Then* (created by the *Next to Normal* team of librettist Brian Yorkey and composer Tom Kitt) exercises the tired tale of a woman who goes to the magical land of New York City, embittered by a recent divorce and not sure she can love again.

I left exhausted at everything the show had thrown at me: confusing timelines, out-of-place choreography, millennial bashing, new mothers eager to give up their careers, oversimplified marriages and divorces, romanticized ideas of New York City, and—possibly most heinously—the spotlight on a two-dimensional military man who gets an entire solo number about parenting ("Hey Kid") while his wife goes through pregnancy and childbirth alone.

Giles shined in the rawest moments of the show, but the character of Elizabeth is bland to the core, and the same goes for her love interests. Bridget Adams-King as best friend Kate had charisma to carry the show, but she was plagued with vocal counterparts that shrilly overwhelmed her low, open belting. Parker Guidry was the top player in the production; they were refreshingly genuine and believable as Lucas (who, bonus, is a bisexual man with character depth that actually goes beyond his sexuality).

If/Then tries hard to say something important about fate, destiny, and the way we live our lives, but the shallow storylines and forgettable music undercut these aims. —**TARYN ALLEN** *IF/THEN* Through 2/16: Thu-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 2 and 7:30 PM, Sun 2 PM; also Mon 2/3, 7:30 PM, Athenaeum Theatre, 2936 N. Southport, 773-935-6860, brownpaperbox.org, \$29-50.

Design for killing

Agatha Christie's chestnut gets a good-looking revival at Court.

Sean Graney directs a revival of the most commercially successful play ever. Since Agatha Christie's

THEATER

comic whodunit *The Mousetrap* premiered in 1952 in London, it has never stopped running. So what can a new production add?

For the very few theatergoers (like me) who have never seen the play before: A group of guests arrive at a newly opened inn while a murderer is loose in the countryside. A snowstorm leaves them isolated and one of them may be the murderer. A brave constable arrives on skis to solve a mystery where no one is who they say they are.

The actors sell the relentless, over-the-top mugging of the script the best they can, but the true stars of this production are Arnel Sancianco's fun house mirror set and Alison Siple's cartoon-like color-coded costumes. The ceiling of Monkswell Manor is impossibly high, while doors are just tall enough to admit a person without stooping; this house is basically telling us that reality is being bent here. The extravagant garb advertises that each of these characters is putting us on.

As far as the nonstop droll banter goes, it grows a bit stale after two-plus hours—much like the hard candies everyone keeps popping in their mouths, then throwing away. Whether you find it all a delightful confection or a bit too sickly sweet is a question mark, but murder and deceit have rarely been appointed or dressed so well. —DMITRY SAMAROV *THE MOUSETRAP* Through 2/16: Wed-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat-Sun 2 and 7:30 PM, Court Theatre, 5535 S. Ellis, 773-753-4472, courttheatre.org, \$37.50-\$84.

RR Our bodies, ourselves Recalling the women behind Roe v. Wade

In 1984, my roommate drove across two states so she could get a legal abortion. It took a week and cost her a month's rent. I wasn't surprised when she didn't come back to school. Abortion week coincided with finals week and the final installment of tuition payments. She had it easy. In 1972, my favorite babysitter died of an "infection" everybody knew wasn't from not washing her hands. It terrifies me how quickly the memory of those times fades.

With *Roe*, Lisa Loomer looks back to *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 Supreme Court decision that cleared the way for legal abortion. Aply directed at the Goodman by Vanessa Stalling, *Roe* explores both the legal precedent of the case as argued primarily by Sarah Weddington (Christina Hall) and the life of "Jane Roe," aka Norma McCorvey (Kate Middleton). The production is frightening, and not only because reproductive rights are squarely in the crosshairs of the white supremacist patriarchy that's been empowered since 2016. *Roe* is frightening because with its bell bottoms and rotary phones and pre-Internet landscape, it must seem like quaint, ancient history to anyone who doesn't actually remember the 1970s, years not slavishly documented in real time on the socials.

Roe is built for entertainment value, not detailed history. It's oddly jokey at times and has a lot of awkward direct address. Still, Hall's Weddington makes legalese ring with passion and clarity. Middleton gives McCorvey a sense of fatalism (she expects very little from her life) that's matched by reckless optimism (she's almost always ready for a party). But most of all, *Roe* is urgent. That's the most frightening thing of all. —CATEY SULLIVAN *ROE* Through 2/23: Wed-Thu 7:30 PM, Fri 8 PM, Sat 2 and 8 PM, Sun 2 PM; also Sun 2/2, 7:30 PM; Thu 1/30 and 2/20, 2 PM; Tue 2/11, 7:30 PM, Goodman Theatre, 170 N. Dearborn, 312-443-3800, goodmantheatre.org, \$20-\$60.

Age of consent

MPAACT's campus drama has too many implausibilities.

Playwright and MPAACT founding member Shepsu Aakhu was inspired to write this campus sexual assault drama by a conversation initiated by one of his two college-aged sons, "two Black males living a life completely free from my daily protection." The fear he has on behalf of his family is palpable and, regrettably, well-sourced—conversations about the prevalence of misogyny and assault on universities often sidestep the reality that young Black men in this country still live under an unjust cloud of suspicion. And yet, as justified as Aakhu's anxiety is, the politics and attitudes behind *Spoken Word* are virtually indistinguishable from those found on men's rights forum comment sections, amounting to a panicked screed against the very idea of verbal consent.

If that reads as loaded or unfair, consider the plot here: Izzy (Jelani Pitcher) and Paris (Nadia Pillay), two young adults—kids, really—have a clumsy but ultimately consensual (if nonverbal) attempt at sex. Misinterpreting her roommate's caginess about that night, a white SJW caricature (seemingly inked by alt-right favorite Ben Garrison) puts Izzy on social media blast, making him a pariah on campus.

After days of silence, Paris—hand in hand with Izzy—notifies the college administration that no assault occurred, but a cartoonishly villainous administrator admonishes them both and insists the young man face consequences despite the supposed victim clearly stating no wrongdoing occurred—because the word "yes," this play's other antagonist, wasn't spoken. Director Lauren "LL" Lundy's production features some strong performances, particularly by Veronda G. Carey as a dean (who sees no conflict of interest in sitting on the board overseeing her son's case), but the script's improbabilities cast an ugly pall over the whole affair. —DAN JAKES *SPOKEN WORD* Through 3/1: Thu-Sat 8 PM, Sun 3 PM, Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln, 773-404-7336, mpaact.org, \$30-\$33, \$25-28 students and seniors. 



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PROPOSED 2020 SENIOR DESIGNATED HOUSING PLAN ATTENTION ALL PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS and RAD PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) is releasing proposed updates to the Senior Designated Housing Plan (SDHP) for public comment. The changes made to these policies are to ensure compliance with federal regulations and state and local laws, as well as to allow CHA to adopt or change housing management practices.

The 30-day public comment period begins January 21 and ends February 20, 2020. While CHA encourages and welcomes all program participants, residents, and the community-at-large to review the proposed updates to the SDHP and attend the hearings, **you are not required to attend the public comment hearings in order to submit comments.** The date, time, and location of the public comment hearings are as follows:

—Jan 30, 2:00pm: Minnie Riperton Apts, 4250 S Princeton
—Feb 5, 4:00pm: Ella Flagg Young, 4645 N Sheridan Rd
—Feb 11, 11:00am: Patrick Sullivan, 1633 W Madison

Public housing residents, RAD Program participants, and the public may submit comments on the Proposed SDHP during the public comment period. The 30-day comment period begins January 21 and ends February 20, 2020. All comments must be received by February 20.

Copies of the Proposed Updates to the Senior Designated Housing Plan will be available beginning January 21 until February 20, 2020 at the following locations:

—CHA and HCV Administrative Offices
—Family Investment Center (FIC)
—Central Advisory Council Office
—HCV Regional Office – South
—HCV Regional Office – West
—Erie Neighborhood House:

*Little Village
West Town
North Office
South Office
SE Office*

60 E Van Buren St
4859 S Wabash St
243 E 32nd St
10 W 35th St
1852 S Albany Ave
4225 W 25th St
1347 W Erie St
1922 N Pulaski Rd
1915 S Blue Island
9010 S Commercial

—Spanish Coalition for Housing:

www.thecha.org

Mail, E-mail or Fax comments to:
Chicago Housing Authority
Attention: Proposed SDHP
60 E. Van Buren St, 12th Floor
Chicago, IL 60605
commentontheplan@thecha.org
Fax 312. 913.7837

If you have a question about this notice, please call the CHA at 312.913-7300.
To request a reasonable accommodation, please call 312.913.7690. TTY 866.331.3603

If you, or someone you are helping, have questions, you have the right to get help and information in your language at no cost. Please call us (312) 742-8500 or email at chala@thecha.org to assist you with an interpreter.

THE BEST CHICAGO ALBUMS OF THE 2010s

The *Reader* polled dozens of critics to arrive at an absolutely indisputable ranked list of several hundred records that will definitely not start any arguments.

By *READER* STAFF AND CONTRIBUTORS

Visit chicagoreader.com for more—including loads of streaming music and all 57 critics' individual ballots.

When I consider the past decade in Chicago music, I think about the songs and albums that not only muscled their way into my memory but also deepened my understanding of the place where I live. Music helped me navigate a city that seems to weather seismic sociopolitical changes several times per year—the six months between the FBI’s November 2018 raid of Alderman Ed Burke’s office and the mayoral runoff election felt like a decade. Songs provided me with new insight into the forces driving the record single-year number of public school closings in 2013, the Emanuel administration’s cover-up of Laquan McDonald’s 2014 murder by Chicago police officer Jason Van Dyke, the City Council’s approval of construction contracts for a \$95 million police and fire academy in West Garfield Park, and the abuse of tax increment financing to assist billion-dollar developments that will help displace the disadvantaged people that TIFs are supposed to benefit. Chicago musicians not only consider the specifics of what it means to live in this city but also frequently engage the community with more than their songs. Their albums and activism shape the culture in Chicago and elsewhere.

My listening experience, rooted as it has been in Chicago, isn't reflected in the "best albums of the 2010s" packages that the country's major music and culture outlets published late last year. And I didn't expect it to be. They're concerned with the broader world of music or with a narrowly defined genre, not with a specific city. I knew these lists would

exclude a lot of important Chicago music, even though the city left an indelible imprint on pop during the 2010s (hello, drill). So I wanted the *Reader* to undertake something similar that would be nothing but great Chicago records, top to bottom.

With that in mind, the music department set out to create a “best Chicago albums of the decade” project. We e-mailed ballots to dozens of music critics—podcasters, zine writers, bloggers, freelance journalists—who’d demonstrated their engagement with the local scene. Our definition of a “Chicago album” was fluid. The artist could be born here but now living elsewhere; a group of musicians from several cities could have convened here to record. The point was to encourage diversity, not artificially narrow the field.

Fifty-seven critics ranked their ten favorite Chicago albums from the past decade, and we compiled the results in an ordered list that wound up 338 albums long. A first-place pick earned ten points, a second-place pick nine,

and so on till tenth place, which counted for just one point. This scoring system inevitably generated a lot of ties in the lower reaches of the list—there are only 44 numerical ranks assigned to all those albums—but it also created some clear winners.

One benefit of a massive decade-long retrospective is that it can introduce wonderful music to an audience that missed it entirely the first time around. That possibility guided our decisions when we chose 50 of those 338 albums to get a little extra attention, in the form of a paragraph written by a critic who'd picked it. Instead of focusing on the records with the most votes, we looked for the ones that didn't seem to have gotten enough attention on other lists.

We also wanted to represent at least some of the dizzying breadth of Chicago music. As a result, this might be one of the most varied “decade in review” pieces you’ll read, covering hip-hop, gospel, R&B, house, ambient, hardcore punk, jazz, metal, electronic noise, soul,

indie rock, footwork, contemporary classical, powerviolence, and whatever you want to call Fire-Toolz. Whether an album listed here tied for 44th place or came in fourth, it's important and worth your time. You might not agree with the rankings or even the picks, but we hope you'll listen with an open mind. —LEOR GALIL

44 Twenty-six-way tie, one point each

- ▶ **ANGEL EYES**, *Midwestern* (The Myleene Sheath, 2010)
- ▶ **JOSH BERMAN TRIO**, *A Dance and a Hop* (Delmark, 2015)
- ▶ **BUST!**, *Suck Kuts* (Cassette Deck Media Conglomerate, 2010)
- ▶ **KWEKU COLLINS**, *Nat Love* (Closed Sessions, 2016)
- ▶ **DIVINO NIÑO**, *Foam* (Winspear, 2019)
- ▶ **DREEZY**, *No Hard Feelings* (Interscope, 2016)
- ▶ **FREDDIE GIBBS**, *Freddie*



 JASON WYATT FREDERICK



That masked man isn't Nobody—well, it's sort of Nobody. It's also Willis Earl Beal. ➦ JASON WYATT FREDERICK

- (ESGN/Empire, 2018)
- ▶ **CHRISTIAN JALON**, *Vinyl*ed Love (self-released, 2017)
- ▶ **JORDANNA**, *Sweet Tooth* (self-released, 2018)
- ▶ **JUDSON CLAIBORNE**, *Time and Temperature* (La Société Expéditionnaire, 2010)
- ▶ **LOCRIAN**, *Infinite Dissolution* (Relapse, 2015)
- ▶ **MINES**, *Just Another Thing That Got Ruined* (Lake Paradise, 2013)
- ▶ **MISTER WALLACE**, *Faggot EP* (Futurehood, 2016)
- ▶ **PANICSVILLE**, *A Dragonfly for Each Corpse* (Smeraldina-Rima, 2010)
- ▶ **PAYASA**, *Demo* (self-released, 2018)
- ▶ **QARI & GREEN SLLIME**, *Operation Hennessy* (Broke Ass, 2019)
- ▶ **REMPIS PERCUSSION QUARTET**, *Cochonnerie* (Aerophonic, 2017)

Saxophonist Dave Rempis is a vital part of the improvised-music community in Chicago and beyond, not just for his playing but also for his networking and programming, and he's in so many great groups that it's a fool's errand to choose just one. But I'm a sucker for bands with two drummers, and when those drummers are Tim Daisy and Frank Rosaly—two of the best going—well, that's game, set, and match. This burly, long-running ensemble is equally exhilarating whether creating engrossing textural explorations or dense, muscular grooves, and Rempis likewise excels wherever he ventures: thoughtful melodies, driving osti-

atos, explosive abstract flights. Best of all, every so often the furious turbulence of the rhythm section (which also includes bassist Ingebrigt Håker Flaten) creates such a powerful updraft that Rempis's scalding horn practically reaches low Earth orbit. —**PHILIP MONTORO**



- ▶ **SIN ORDEN**, *Ha Llegado el Momento* (Not Normal Tapes, 2015)
- ▶ **SONNY FALLS**, *Some Kind of Spectre* (Sooper, 2018)
- ▶ **TREASURE FLEET**, *Cocamotion* (Recess, 2012)
- ▶ **TWIN PEAKS**, *Sunken EP* (Autumn Tone, 2013)
- ▶ **WILCO**, *Star Wars* (dBpm, 2015)
- ▶ **WILD BELLE**, *Everybody One of a Kind* (Tuff Gong Worldwide, 2019)
- ▶ **RIC WILSON**, *Soul Bounce* (self-released, 2016)

- ▶ **ZE'EV**, *Kismet* (self-released, 2016)
- ▶ **ZMONEY AND CHASE THE MONEY**, *ZTM* (4EverPaid, 2017)

43 Thirty-two-way tie, two points each

- ▶ **THE AUTUMN DEFENSE**, *Once Around* (Yep Roc, 2010)
- ▶ **WILLIS EARL BEAL**, *Acousmatic Sorcery* (XL, 2012)

When I first heard Willis Earl Beal, it seemed like his disarmingly shambolic acoustic lullabies could articulate every complicated emotion I was having but couldn't name, then broadcast them back to me. The Chicago native recorded *Acousmatic Sorcery* on a RadioShack karaoke machine using cheap or scavenged instruments, and even his most fragile song felt like it could break open the earth. My 2011 Reader story on Beal helped him land a deal with XL Recordings, which put out *Acousmatic Sorcery* the following year (I helped write the bio for his press release). Beal's evolution continues to produce music that expresses bittersweet yearning with rare and idiosyncratic power, but I'll always cherish his debut. —**LEOR GALIL**

- ▶ **BEAT DRUN JUEL**, *Suppressor* (self-released, 2016)
- ▶ **OLIVIA BLOCK**, *Dissolution* (Glistening Examples, 2016)
- ▶ **BLOODIEST**, *Descent* (Relapse, 2011)
- ▶ **BOTTOMLESS PIT**, *Shade Perennial* (Comedy Minus One, 2013)
- ▶ **JOSEPH CHILLIAMS**, *Henry Church* (self-released, 2017)
- ▶ **COPPICE**, *Big Wad Excisions* (Quakebasket, 2013)
- ▶ **DARK FOG**, *Make You Believe* (Eye Vybe/Cardinal Fuzz, 2018)
- ▶ **DEEPER**, *Deeper* (Fire Talk, 2018)
- ▶ **DOLLY VARDEN**, *For a While* (Mid-Fi, 2013)
- ▶ **DOWSING**, *All I Could Find Was You* (Count Your Lucky Stars, 2011)
- ▶ **FEE LION**, *Blood Sisters* (self-released, 2019)
- ▶ **HITTER**, *2018 Demo* (self-released, 2018)
- ▶ **IMMORTAL BIRD**, *Thrive on Neglect* (20 Buck Spin, 2019)
- ▶ **IMPULSIVE HEARTS**, *Sorry in the Summer* (Beautiful Strange, 2016)
- ▶ **LORD MANTIS**, *Pervertor* (Candlelight, 2012)

Chicago is well-known for forward-thinking metal, but few albums capture the city's

2010s vibe like the second full-length from blackened sludge crew Lord Mantis. Locrian and Pelican coursed between beauty and despair; Yakuza and Gigan spun heady, psych-addled trips; Oozing Wound and Bongripper, well, ripped. But meanwhile, Lord Mantis stewed in misanthropy, nihilism, and back-alley grime. Produced by Sanford Parker, *Pervertor* isn't for the faint of heart: it's uncompromisingly bleak and demands a visceral response. The band have gone through multiple transformations since 2012, among them suffering the loss of founding drummer Bill Bumgardner in 2016, yet they've persevered—and *Pervertor* remains one of Chicago's most ferocious musical exports. —**JAMIE LUDWIG**

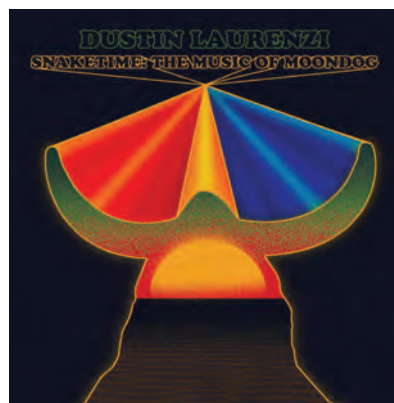
- ▶ **MINISTRY**, *Relapse* (AFM, 2012)
- ▶ **SEN MORIMOTO**, *Cannonball!* (Sooper, 2018)
- ▶ **NOT FOR YOU**, *Drown* (Sooper, 2018)
- ▶ **OPTIONS**, *Driftwood Metaphor* (Grandpa Bay, 2015)
- ▶ **PINK FROST**, *Sundowning* (Notes & Bolts/BLVD, 2013)
- ▶ **SODDY DAISY**, *Trashtopia* (self-released, 2015)
- ▶ **MAVIS STAPLES**, *You Are Not Alone* (Anti-, 2010)
- ▶ **SUN ROOMS**, *Sun Rooms* (Delmark, 2010)
- ▶ **SUN SPEAK**, *Sun Speak With Sara Serpa* (Flood Music, 2018)
- ▶ **SURACHAI**, *Embraced* (Trash Audio, 2013)
- ▶ **TINK**, *Winter's Diary 4* (Winter's Diary, 2016)
- ▶ **TOUCHED BY GHOUL**, *Murder Circus* (Under Road, 2016)
- ▶ **VARIOUS ARTISTS**, *Cult Cargo: Salsa Boricua de Chicago* (Numero Group, 2011)

The Numero Group had already offered a rough idea of what its Cult Cargo series was about with compilations sourcing material from Belize and the Bahamas, but 2011's *Salsa Boricua de Chicago* flipped the concept of "American music reinterpreted by people in the Caribbean" on its head—it features artists of the underserved Cuban, Mexican, and Puerto Rican diasporas in Chicago. Culled from the 1970s output of the Ebirac label, run by community activist Carlos Ruiz, *Salsa Boricua* includes amateur orquestas throwing down vibrant salsa, guaguancó, guajira, merengue, bolero, and rumba grooves that could match anything coming out of New York or Miami. Lock in and let the funk out. —**PATRICK MASTERSON**

- ▶ **MATT ULERY'S LOOM**, *Wake an*

- Echo (Greenleaf Music, 2013)
- ▶ **YOUNG PAPPY**, *2 Cups: Part 2 of Everything* (self-released, 2015)

Before Shaquon Thomas introduced himself to the Chicago hip-hop scene as Young Pappy, the stories told through drill music were set almost exclusively on the south and west sides of the city. In 2015 Pappy released the mixtape *2 Cups: Part 2 of Everything*—the second installment of a series named after his slain friend Mensa “2 Cups” Kifle—and definitively expanded the geography of drill to the north side, Uptown in particular. Pappy had some success with his music while alive, but *2 Cups: Part 2 of Everything* (hosted by DJ Legacy) has earned him mostly posthumous fame—he was murdered at age 20 in May 2015, just weeks after its release. The lead single, “Killa,” has become part of the drill canon, and Pappy’s lyrics throughout the mixtape use graphic accounts of aggression and passion to paint a nightmarish picture that testifies to his artistry. —**MATT HARVEY**



- ▶ **TOMORROW** (Thrill Jockey, 2015)
- ▶ **G HERBO**, *Welcome to Fazoland* (Machine Entertainment Group, 2014)
- ▶ **HARM'S WAY**, *Posthuman* (Metal Blade, 2018)
- ▶ **KATIE GOT BANDZ**, *Bandz and Hittaz* (self-released, 2012)

She was introduced to Chicago in 2011 as “that girl toting the pistol in Shady’s ‘Go In’ video,” but by the time she’d dropped her first project, *Bandz and Hittaz*, Katie—or *Katiiiiieeee*, as her signature ad-lib went—had become the de facto queen of drill. The project, produced entirely by her cousin BlockOnDaTrack, has never gotten its due as one of the era’s best releases, but tough, minimalist bangers such as “I Need a Hitta” and “Ridin’ Round and We Drillin’” epitomize the spirit of golden-era drill. I’ll never forget the night at some bougie Pirate Bay-sponsored party at Lumen when the DJ dropped “Hitta” no less than three times in an hour. —**MEAGHAN GARVEY**

- ▶ **THE KICKBACK**, *Weddings & Funerals* (Jullian, 2017)
- ▶ **QUIN KIRCHNER**, *The Other Side of Time* (Astral Spirits/Monofonus Press/Spacetones, 2018)
- ▶ **DUSTIN LAURENZI**, *Snaketime: The Music of Moondog* (Astral Spirits/Feeding Tube, 2019)

In the spirit of albums by predecessors such as John Zorn and Marc Ribot, Dustin Laurenzi’s *Snaketime* cleverly expands the jazz palette by exploring a forerunner who stood sideways to the canon. In this case, the forerunner is Viking-helmed, Bach-influenced Beat street musician Moondog, whose strong sense of melody and deft use of counterpoint and minimalist repetition provide a vivid, pleasing structure within which Laurenzi’s octet can interweave hummable tunes and brawling skronk. It’s avant-garde jazz at its most accessible or mainstream jazz at its most avant-garde, depending on how you want to hear it. Either way, it’s a joy—and evidence of the talent and genius to be found in the Chicago jazz scene’s nooks and crannies. —**NOAH BERLATSKY**

- ▶ **BILL MACKAY & RYLEY WALKER**, *SpiderBeetleBee* (Drag City, 2017)
- ▶ **GIA MARGARET**, *There’s Always*

- ▶ *Glimmer* (Orindal, 2018)
- ▶ **NICOLE MITCHELL**, *Mandorla Awakening II: Emerging Worlds* (FPE, 2017)
- ▶ **MONVMENT**, *Geminae* (Dead Section, 2013)
- ▶ **NONZOO**, *Wazoo* (Already Dead Tapes & Records, 2017)
- ▶ **ONO**, *Albino* (Moniker, 2012)
- ▶ **KC ORTIZ**, *Beach Street* (self-released, 2017)
- ▶ **CHARLES RUMBACK**, *Cadillac Turns* (Monofonus Press/Astral Spirits, 2019)
- ▶ **SERENGETI**, *Kenny Dennis EP* (Anticon, 2012)
- ▶ **TIGRESS**, *Tigress EP* (Not Normal Tapes, 2017)
- ▶ **VERUCA SALT**, *Ghost Notes* (El Camino, 2015)
- ▶ **BEAU WANZER**, *Untitled* (self-released, 2014)
- ▶ **ZMONEY**, *Rich B4 Rap* (self-released, 2013)



41 Twenty-nine-way tie, four points each

- ▶ **BONGRIPPER**, *Miserable* (Great Barrier, 2014)
- ▶ **BRAID**, *No Coast* (Topshelf, 2014)
- ▶ **BROKEBACK**, *Brokeback and the Black Rock* (Thrill Jockey, 2013)
- ▶ **CALIFONE**, *Sometimes Good Weather Follows Bad People* (Jealous Butcher, 2012)
- ▶ **CLOUD MOUTH**, *Keep Well* (Kid Sister Everything/Ice Age/Adagio830, 2011)
- ▶ **CONDENADA**, *Discografia* (Not Normal Tapes, 2012)
- ▶ **MYKELE DEVILLE**, *Peace, Fam* (self-released, 2017)
- ▶ **DRAMA**, *Gallows* (Drama Music, 2016)
- ▶ **KEVIN DRUMM**, *Humid Weather* (self-released, 2012)
- ▶ **LIAM HAYES**, *Slurrup* (Fat Possum, 2015)

- ▶ **TATIANA HAZEL**, *Toxic* (self-released, 2018)
- ▶ **JUICE WRLD**, *Death Race for Love* (Grade A Productions/Interscope, 2019)
- ▶ **KID SISTER**, *Kiss Kiss Kiss* (Fool’s Gold, 2010)
- ▶ **ROY KINSEY**, *Blackie* (Futurehood/Not Normal Tapes, 2018)
- ▶ **KITTYHAWK**, *Hello, Again* (Count Your Lucky Stars, 2014)
- ▶ **LIL DURK**, *I’m Still a Hitta* (Only the Family, 2012)
- ▶ **LIL DURK**, *Signed to the Streets* (Only the Family, 2013)
- ▶ **TY MONEY**, *Cinco de Money* (Sibley Boyz Muzik Group/Gold Coast Music Group, 2015)
- ▶ **PANEGYRIST**, *Hierurgy* (I, Voidhanger, 2018)
- ▶ **PIVOT GANG**, *You Can’t Sit With Us* (Pivot Gang, 2019)
- ▶ **RATBOYS**, *AOID* (Topshelf, 2014)
- ▶ **JANA RUSH**, *Pariah* (Objects Limited, 2017)
- ▶ **RUSSIAN CIRCLES**, *Blood Year* (Sargent House, 2019)
- ▶ **SABA**, *Bucket List Project* (self-released, 2016)
- ▶ **SINCERE ENGINEER**, *Rhombithian* (Red Scare Industries, 2017)
- ▶ **SPEKTRAL QUARTET**, *Chambers* (Parlour Tapes, 2013)

Chambers is the 2013 debut of Spektral Quartet, a Grammy-nominated string ensemble that often operates in the classical realm and just as often redefines it. The album is an entirely Chicago affair, released on Parlour Tapes (a local cassette-focused label dedicated to contemporary art music) and featuring works by six local composers—which Spektral Quartet attacks with Windy City grit and passion. On the Liza White piece *Zin Zin Zin Zin* (inspired by Mos Def’s wordless freestyling on the Roots song “Double Trouble”) the musicians get about as percussive as possible while mostly bowing their strings—you can hear them strike their instruments while making sonic booms of downstrokes.

—**SALEM COLLO-JULIN**

- ▶ **TIME & PRESSURE**, *The Gateway City Sound* (Safe Insound, 2019)
- ▶ **SAM TRUMP**, *Purple Skies* (Superlative Muzak, 2017)
- ▶ **VUKARI**, *Aevum* (Vendetta, 2019)

42 Twenty-six-way tie, three points each

- ▶ **ABSOLUTELY NOT**, *Mister Something* (Chain Smoking, 2013)
- ▶ **AALIYAH ALLAH**, *Being* (self-released, 2017)
- ▶ **BALLISTER**, *Worse for the Wear* (Aerophonic, 2015)
- ▶ **CANADIAN RIFLE**, *Peaceful Death* (Dead Broke Rekerds, 2018)
- ▶ **CB RADIO GORGEOUS**, *Plays CB Radio Gorgeous* (Not Normal Tapes, 2018)
- ▶ **DAYMAKER**, *Amen/Evening* (self-released, 2015)
- ▶ **ELEVENTH DREAM DAY**, *Works for*

40 Twenty-eight-way tie, five points each

- ▶ **JOSHUA ABRAMS**, *Natural Information* (Eremite, 2010)
- ▶ **ADVANCE BASE**, *A Shut-In's Prayer* (Orindal, 2012)
- ▶ **AZITA**, *Disturbing the Air* (Drag City, 2011)
- ▶ **BBU**, *bell hooks* (Mishka, 2012)
- ▶ **ARI BROWN**, *Groove Awakening* (Delmark, 2013)
- ▶ **CROSS RECORD**, *Be Good* (Lay Flat, 2012)
- ▶ **CRUDE HUMOR**, *Jeri's Grill* (Not Normal Tapes, 2015)
- ▶ **DISROTTED**, *Disrotted* (Diseased Audio, 2015)
- ▶ **DJ NATE**, *Da Trak Genius* (Planet Mu, 2010)
- ▶ **DJ PAYPAL**, *Buy Now* (LuckyMe, 2015)
- ▶ **DJ TAYE**, *Still Trippin'* (Hyperdub, 2018)

DJ Taye's *Still Trippin'* is a consummate turn in progressive footwork. The Teklife member employs a palette of rap, R&B, New Jersey club, Baltimore club, and more to make the argument that footwork spans style and region, while also reconstructing songwriting's role in the Chicago subgenre. As frenetic as footwork can be, *Still Trippin'* is framed by the meditative, wordless introductory track "2094," which immediately dissolves the listener in the recesses

of the artist's mind. The rest of the album unfurls in surprising leaps from one aesthetic to another, and nothing is misspent—the young virtuoso forges ahead to somewhere new, his world a kaleidoscopic milieu.

—TARA C. MAHADEVAN

- ▶ **ENGINE SUMMER**, *Trophy Kids* (self-released, 2017)
- ▶ **FREE SNACKS**, *Fast Food* (Why? Records, 2019)
- ▶ **THE FUNS**, *My Survival* (Manic Static, 2015)
- ▶ **THE KREUTZER SONATA**, *The Gutters of Paradise* (Don't Panic/No Time/Collision Course, 2018)
- ▶ **LA ARMADA**, *Anti-Colonial Vol. 1* (Bird Attack, 2018)
- ▶ **RAVYN LENA**, *Crush* (Atlantic/Three Twenty Three Music Group, 2018)
- ▶ **RAVYN LENA**, *Moon Shoes EP* (Three Twenty Three Music Group, 2016)
- ▶ **LOCAL H**, *Hallelujah! I'm a Bum* (Slimstyle, 2012)
- ▶ **JEFF MILLS**, *Emerging Crystal Universe* (Axis, 2014)
- ▶ **MODERN VICES**, *Modern Vices* (Autumn Tone, 2014)
- ▶ **OOZING WOUND**, *Whatever Forever* (Thrill Jockey, 2016)
- ▶ **JOEY PURP**, *iiiDrops* (self-released, 2017)
- ▶ **SUN RA**, *Exotica* (Modern Harmonic, 2017)
- ▶ **TENCI**, *My Heart Is an Open*



All hail our gentle and benevolent savior, Lord Mantis. ✂ JASON WYATT FREDERICK



A series of political engagement events as curated by

Election Year Kick-Off Party with Young Democrats of Illinois

January 17
5:30pm - 7:30pm
Haymarket Pub & Brewery
737 W. Randolph

Invest S/W Community Celebration: Humboldt Park, Austin and North Lawndale

January 18
11am - 2pm
Kehrein Center for the Arts
5628 W. Washington Blvd.

Bus Ride to Women's March Chicago

January 18
9am - 3pm
Ogden Mall
1271 E. Ogden Ave.
Naperville, IL

Fox Valley Illinois Women's March

January 18
12pm - 1pm
Downtown Geneva
100 S. 3rd St.
Geneva, IL

Women's March Chicago 2020

January 18
11am - 1pm
Grant Park

ACE January Meeting-Report: One Year in Office

January 19
2:30pm - 4:30pm
Community Room,
1st Congregational-UCC
25 E. Benton Ave.
Naperville, IL

MLK Day 2020: My Dream My Chicago

January 20
10am - 2pm
Heartland Alliance
819 N. Leamington Ave.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day Panel

January 20
2pm - 4pm
Lutheran School of
Theology at Chicago
1100 E. 55th St.

Impact of the 2020 Census: Collections, Concerns, Changes

January 21
5:30pm - 7pm
Union League Club
of Chicago
65 W. Jackson Blvd.

Roe Vs. Wade Anniversary Event

January 23
5:30pm - 9pm
Morgan Manufacturing
401 N. Morgan St.

Candidate Forum: US House of Representatives IL1

January 23
7:30pm - 9pm
First Unitarian Church
of Chicago
5650 S. Woodlawn Ave.

The 1619 Project with Nikole Hannah-Jones

January 27
6:30pm - 8pm
Venue SIX10
610 S. Michigan Ave.

How to be an Antiracist

January 28
6pm - 7:30pm
League of Women Voters
332 S. Michigan Ave.

Public Workshop

February 9
4pm - 6pm
Chicago Therapy
Collective
5247 N. Clark St.

For more information of listed events please visit persistlist.org

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READER

Field (Hobbies, 2019)

- ▶ **VARSITY**, *Parallel Person* (Babe City, 2018)
- ▶ **VELCRO LEWIS GROUP**, *Amnesia Gaze* (Safety Meeting, 2017)
- ▶ **ZE'EV**, *GTP* (self-released, 2018)



TALsounds, *Love Sick*

totally improvised music—loops of billowing, burbling synths topped by the breathy arias of her vocals—sound as melodious and cogently narrative as a meticulously produced pop song. Her standout 2017 release, *Love Sick*, is as challenging and rewarding as anything by Bjork or FKA Twigs, with the same internal drama as an all-consuming love affair—and the same splendid highs and lows. I can easily imagine “I Can’t Sleep” topping the charts in a musical universe more keen on free exploration than our own. —**J.R. NELSON**

38 Thirty-way tie, six points each

- ▶ **BLACKER FACE**, *Distinctive Juju* (Sooper, 2019)
- ▶ **BEACH BUNNY**, *Prom Queen* (Duel Disk Media, 2018)
- ▶ **DATE STUFF**, *Date Stuff* (Sooper, 2017)
- ▶ **DOWSING**, *It’s Still Pretty Terrible* (Count Your Lucky Stars, 2012)
- ▶ **THE EVENING ATTRACTION**, *The End, Again* (Classic Waxx, 2018)
- ▶ **THE FLAT FIVE**, *It’s a World of Love and Hope* (Bloodshot, 2016)
- ▶ **FREE SNACKS**, *Eat Good Tape* (Why? Records, 2018)
- ▶ **G HERBO**, *Humble Beast* (Machine Entertainment/150 Dream Team/Cinematic Music Group, 2017)

Despite blowing up off the 2012 smash hit “Kill Shit,” Lil Herb always refused to be labeled a drill artist. He showed us why on his 2017 debut album as G Herbo, *Humble Beast*. With raw, honest retellings of street tales mixed with sobering reflections on his childhood, the 21-year-old contextualized and humanized the violence that defined Chicago drill. *Humble Beast* balances soulful production, gritty yet introspective rhymes, and club hits, showing Herb beginning to master his craft and catapulting him into position to become one of rap’s brightest stars. —**AARON ALLEN II**

- ▶ **THE HECKS**, *My Star* (Trouble in Mind, 2019)
- ▶ **IMMORTAL BIRD**, *Akrasia* (Closed Casket, 2013)
- ▶ **ANGELA JAMES**, *Way Down Deep* (self-released, 2014)
- ▶ **JOIE DE VIVRE**, *The North End* (Count Your Lucky Stars, 2010)

39 Three-way tie, 5.5 points each

- ▶ **CONEHEADS**, *L.P.1. aka 14 Year Old High School PC-Fascist Hype Lords Rip Off Devo for the Sake of Extorting \$\$\$ From Helpless Impressionable Midwestern Internet Peoplepunks L.P.* (International Players Club, 2015)
- ▶ **NICHOLAS SZCZEPANIK**, *Please Stop Loving Me* (Streamline, 2011)

Nicholas Szczepanik began releasing sublime drone pieces late in the aughts, just as I discovered the joys of solo walks, and they remain my favorite companions for ten-mile rambles through Chicago’s neighborhoods. The best of those albums, 2011’s *Please Stop Loving Me*, begins with a bottomless current of churchy organlike chords that seems to come from just out of view, swelling through slowly shifting musical shapes as if from within a bank of clouds. Eventually, Szczepanik resolves the drone into a massive final chord that feels like finding the peace of home after a long journey—it’s a sanctifying balm to those of us dedicated to spending time alone, whether by choice or not. —**J.R. NELSON**

- ▶ **TALSOUNDS**, *Love Sick* (Ba Da Bing!, 2017)

Over the course of the past decade, Natalie Chami, who records and performs as TALsounds, has mastered the art of making her

- ▶ **KING LOUIE**, *Tony* (Lawless, 2014)

King Louie’s earliest work was rough around the edges, a prophecy of Chicago rap’s national breakthrough. Yet initially, he highlighted a knowing sense of humor that suggested, if not optimism, then at least the personality to bridge the gulf between a far-flung regional satellite and the mainstream. Then the Chicago scene suddenly went supernova, creating a darkly controversial new center of gravity. His response, *Tony*, was Louie’s best project of the decade, despite being his least colorful and most tersely aggressive, because he recognized that the ground had moved beneath everyone’s feet. He went back to the source for a brooding, apocalyptic project that managed the neat trick of charging its grimly violent times with undeniable electricity. It also launched three classic street singles: “Til I Meet Selena,” “Live & Die in Chicago,” and “B.O.N.,” the last of which spawned re-versions coast to coast. —**DAVID DRAKE**

- ▶ **MAPS & ATLASES**, *Beware & Be Grateful* (Barsuk, 2012)
- ▶ **NICK MAZZARELLA AND TOMEKA REID**, *Signaling* (Nessa, 2017)
- ▶ **JANICE MISURELL-MITCHELL**, *Vanishing Points* (Southport, 2013)
- ▶ **MONOBODY**, *Raytracing* (Sooper, 2018)

A gem of Chicago’s underground, instrumental quintet Monobody play a multifaceted prog-rock fusion with expansive shifts in sound and style. *Raytracing*, their masterful second album, journeys through prog rock, jazz, postrock, melodic math rock, and even the occasional metal riff. Monobody supplement their pulsing piano passages, squiggly synth lines, heavy bass grooves, and rollicking guitar leads with lap steel guitar, vibraphone, and programmed electronics to create a cornucopia of techniques and timbres. And unlike prog percussionists who go overboard, drummer Nnamdi Ogbonnaya crafts intricate, propulsive beats that always mesh with their surroundings—he knows when to pull back and when to go all out. —**SCOTT MORROW**

- ▶ **MOTHER EVERGREEN**, *Mother Evergreen* (self-released, 2016)
- ▶ **MY GOLD MASK**, *Leave Me Midnight* (Goldy Tapes, 2013)
- ▶ **NE-HI**, *Offers* (Grand Jury, 2016)
- ▶ **ANGEL OLSEN**, *Burn Your Fire for*

No Witness (Jagjaguwar, 2014)

- ▶ **OOZING WOUND**, *Earth Suck* (Thrill Jockey, 2014)
- ▶ **OOZING WOUND**, *Retrash* (Thrill Jockey, 2013)
- ▶ **OPEN MIKE EAGLE**, *Dark Comedy* (Mello Music Group, 2014)
- ▶ **TOM SCHRAEDER & HIS EGO**, *Gush* (self-released, 2015)
- ▶ **SICKO MOBB**, *Super Saiyan: Vol. 1* (self-released, 2014)
- ▶ **SMINO**, *Noir* (Zero Fatigue/Downtown/Interscope, 2018)
- ▶ **TRAXMAN**, *Da Mind of Traxman* (Planet Mu, 2012)
- ▶ **RON TRENT**, *Raw Footage* (Electric Blue, 2012)
- ▶ **RYLEY WALKER**, *Golden Sings That Have Been Sung* (Dead Oceans, 2016)



37 Twenty-six-way tie, seven points each

- ▶ **JOSHUA ABRAMS & NATURAL INFORMATION SOCIETY**, *Simultaneity* (Eremite, 2017)
- ▶ **BOBBY CONN**, *Rise Up!* (Fire, 2010 reissue of 1998 album)
- ▶ **COPING**, *Nope* (Protagonist, 2012)

Coping already have the classic emo one-album-and-done trope covered—now they await rediscovery. The band’s sole full-length, 2012’s *Nope*, opens with a screaming call-and-response vocal passage that bleeds teenage angst: “Have you ever thought that I don’t care for anything you have to say to me?” The band’s unabashed youthful confidence and willingness to be obnoxiously disorienting recalls local emo legends Cap’n Jazz as well as their own



Angel Marcloid of Fire-Toolz may very well play a flaming power drill. It's a trade secret.

JASON WYATT FREDERICK

emo-revival influences, Snowing and Algeron Cadwallader. *Nope* is an exhilarating 100-meter dash of unhinged emotional exasperations and tangled guitars, with the melodies acting only as a home base to return to. Into this outpouring, Coping incorporate teenage love, awkwardness, heartbreak, and rebellion—the makings of a benchmark record for midwestern emo.

—TJ KLIEBHAN

- **CORDOBA**, *Break the Locks Off Everything New* (self-released, 2018)
- **CUPCAKKE**, *Queen Elizabitch* (self-released, 2017)

Cupcake may be retired from rap, at least for the moment, but her second full-length, 2017's *Queen Elizabitch*, is still out there turning heads. Her music is witty, authentic, and often hilariously explicit, with track titles such as "Cumshot" and lyrics that straddle the line between playful and raunchy ("I save dick by giving it CPR," for instance, or "I'm tryna fuck for a buck, not make love to Jodeci"). *Queen Elizabitch* also shows us the diversity in Cupcake's repertoire: on "33rd" she's upbeat, poppy, and inspirational, while on "Reality, Pt. 4" she raps a capella about her struggle to find an audience, her thoughts of suicide, and the hunger and poverty she endured growing up in Washington Park. She may be famous for her salacious rhymes, and it's true, she's all that—but she's also a lot more.

—S. NICOLE LANE

- **DISAPPEARS**, *Live at Echo*

Canyon (Plus Tapes, 2011)

- **DKV TRIO**, *Sound in Motion in Sound* (Not Two, 2014)
- **FREAKWATER**, *Scheherazade* (Bloodshot, 2016)

Catherine Irwin and Janet Beveridge Bean have recorded as Freakwater mostly in Chicago, but seven albums and 25 years into their career, they shifted to Louisville, expanding their band with some north Kentucky musicians. The result is *Scheherazade*, filled with looser, bigger versions of their gothic country dirges—an aesthetic with more sweep and more serrated edges. "Down Will Come Baby" is a characteristically uncanny track, turning the lullaby "Rock-a-bye Baby" into a loping Morricone outlaw epic for murdered infants. Every song on *Scheherazade* swings and rasps; you don't want them to stop, even as they cut you. Though Irwin and Bean will probably always be better known for their classic 90s material, this record may be their most perfect. —NOAH BERLATSKY

- **PASTOR DONALD GAY**, *On a Glorious Day* (The Sirens, 2019)

No stranger to hard times, gospel singer Donald Gay has faced formidable challenges over the past decade. In 2010, he became the only surviving sibling of a legendary musical family when he lost his last elder sister, pianist Geraldine Gay (the Gay Sisters scored gospel hits from the late 1940s through the '60s). But on his debut as a leader, released when he was 73, his deep bluesy feeling and sure command of his material remain undiminished. *On a Glorious Day*, which juxtaposes songs by his sisters with time-tested standards, demonstrates again and again how resolutely life-affirming gospel can be. Appearances by Donald's son, vocalist and coproducer Gregory "Juno" Gay, and by his guitarist nephew, Donald "Bosie" Hambric, also testify to his thriving lineage and the vitality of the tradition. —AARON COHEN

- **GIGAN**, *Multi-Dimensional Fractal-Sorcery and Super Science* (Willowtip, 2013)
- **GRAMPS THE VAMP**, *The Cave of 10,000 Eyes* (self-released, 2016)
- **GREAT SOCIETY MIND DESTROYERS**, *Spirit Smoke* (Slow Knife, 2011)
- **HIEROGLYPHIC BEING & J.I.T.U.**

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- 2/07 Badfish w/Little Stranger, TROPIDELIC
- 2/08 Sixteen Candles **SOLD OUT**
- 2/09 Jacquees w/Jacob Latimore, FYB, Bluff City
- 2/21 Midnight Memories: One Direction Night **SOLD OUT**
- 2/22 Sin Anesthesia, Malafacha, Dharma
- 2/27 Who's Bad: Michael Jackson Tribute
- 2/28 2/29 3/01 Dashboard Confessional w/The Get Up Kids **SOLD OUT**
- 3/04 Cult of Luna w/Emma Ruth Rundle, Intronaut
- 3/05 We Came As Romans w/The Devil Wears Prada, Gideon, Dayseeker
- 3/06 Ally Brooke
- 3/12 ZZ Ward w/Patrick Droney
- 3/13 Gaelic Storm 3/14 Gaelic Storm
- 3/15 DragonForce w/Unleash The Archers, Visions of Atlantis
- 3/18 Leslie Odom Jr.
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AHN-SAHM-BUHL, *We Are Not the First* (RVNG Intl, 2015)

Raw house music producer Jamal Moss, aka Hieroglyphic Being, has been inspired by otherworldly jazz keyboardist and composer Sun Ra since the start, so his collaboration with longtime Sun Ra Arkestra alto saxophonist Marshall Allen for RVNG Intl. was a dream come true. The result is a mix of live ingredients, including digital horn, polyrhythmic drumming, and spoken word. J.I.T.U. means “Journey Into the Unexpected,” and this album—drawn from nine days of jam sessions with six musicians and two vocalists, all composed and conducted by Moss—lives up to that name, merging unpredictable industrial-edged house beats with free-jazz experimentation. —**JACOB ARNOLD**

- ▶ **THE KICKBACK**, *Sorry All Over the Place* (Jullian, 2015)
- ▶ **TIM KINSELLA, MARVIN TATE, LEROY BACH, AND ANGEL OLSEN**, *Tim Kinsella Sings the Songs of Marvin Tate by Leroy Bach Featuring Angel Olsen* (Joyful Noise, 2013)
- ▶ **MANNEQUIN MEN**, *Mannequin Men* (Addenda, 2011)
- ▶ **ROB MAZUREK OCTET**, *Skull Sessions* (Cuneiform, 2013)
- ▶ **VIC MENSA**, *There's A Lot Going On* (Roc Nation, 2016)
- ▶ **NICOLE MITCHELL'S BLACK EARTH ENSEMBLE**, *Intergalactic Beings* (FPE, 2014)
- ▶ **POLO G**, *Die a Legend* (Columbia, 2019)
- ▶ **POST ANIMAL**, *When I Think of You in a Castle* (Polyvinyl, 2018)
- ▶ **RUSSIAN CIRCLES**, *Guidance* (Sargent House, 2016)
- ▶ **JACKIE SHANE**, *Any Other Way* (Numero Group, 2017)
- ▶ **SMITH WESTERNS**, *Dye It Blonde* (Fat Possum Records, 2011)
- ▶ **VIC SPENCER AND CHRIS CRACK**, *Who the Fuck Is Chris Spencer??* (self-released, 2016)
- ▶ **TORTOISE**, *The Catastrophist* (Thrill Jockey, 2016)
- ▶ **TREE**, *The Tree EP* (self-released, 2011)
- ▶ **JEFF TWEEDY**, *Warm* (dBpm, 2018)
- ▶ **VEE DEE**, *Vee Dee* (BLVD, 2011)
- ▶ **MIRANDA WINTERS**, *Xobeci, What Grows Here?* (Soooper, 2018)



35 Twenty-three-way tie, nine points each

- ▶ **ANATOMY OF HABIT**, *Anatomy of Habit* (self-released, 2011)
- ▶ **THE ATLAS MOTH**, *Coma Noir* (Profound Lore, 2011)
- ▶ **BONGRIPPER**, *Satan Worshipping Doom* (self-released, 2010)
- ▶ **CELL PHONES**, *Get You Alone*

- (Caffeinated, 2013)
- ▶ **CHEER-ACCIDENT**, *No Ifs, Ands or Dogs* (Cuneiform, 2011)
- ▶ **CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CONDUCTED BY RICCARDO MUTI WITH BARBARA FRITTOLE AND OTHERS**, *Verdi: Messa da Requiem* (CSO Resound, 2010)
- ▶ **CHIEF KEEF**, *Almighty So* (self-released, 2013)
- ▶ **CHIEF KEEF**, *Back From the Dead 2* (Glo Gang, 2014)
- ▶ **CUPCAKKE**, *Eden* (self-released, 2018)
- ▶ **DISAPPEARS**, *Era* (Kranky, 2013)
- ▶ **GORILLAZ**, *Humanz* (Warner, 2017)
- ▶ **LIVING BY LANTERNS**, *New Myth/Old Science* (Cuneiform, 2012)

Jointly led by drummer Mike Reed and vibraphonist Jason Adasiewicz, the ensemble Living by Lanterns has released just one album: *New Myth/Old Science*, a magnificent study in artistic transformation and a special entry in Reed's ongoing investigation of post-1950s Chicago jazz history. Reed and Adasiewicz started with an enigmatic 1961 tape found in the Sun Ra collection of the Creative Audio Archive (located at Ravenswood's Experimental Sound Studio), extracting fragments and ideas from the rehearsal recording and expanding them into a suite of compositions—not strictly Ra, not strictly them, but occupying some creative interzone. The ensemble mingles Chicagoans and New Yorkers, and the result is a constant delight—swinging, buoyant, open, and prodding, with a scintillating lineup that includes Greg Ward's mercurial alto saxophone and Mary Halvorson's tensile guitar. —**JOHN CORBETT**

- ▶ **LOCRIAN**, *The Crystal World* (Utech, 2010)
- ▶ **VIC MENSA**, *Innanetape* (self-released, 2013)
- ▶ **OK GO**, *Hungry Ghosts* (Paracade, 2014)
- ▶ **TOMEKA REID QUARTET**, *Tomeka Reid Quartet* (Thirsty Ear, 2015)

Cellist Tomeka Reid had already been a valuable part of the Chicago jazz scene for years when her quartet released its self-titled debut in 2015—and soon thereafter, she took on the world. Now based in New York, Reid creates new improvisational paths for string-forward groups not only with her own bands but also as a valuable member of the Art Ensemble of Chicago. The foundations of those explorations can all be heard here: myriad kinds of electricity flow through Reid's exchanges with guitarist Mary Halvorson, and the album

also showcases Reid's superb compositions, including the lyrical “Etoile” and the open-ended “Glass Light.” —**AARON COHEN**

- ▶ **SERENGETI**, *Dennis 6e* (FlamingoPop, 2018)
- ▶ **TEKLIFE**, *On Life* (Teklife, 2017)
- ▶ **HENRY THREADGILL**, *In for a Penny, in for a Pound* (Pi, 2015)
- ▶ **TINK**, *Winter's Diary 2* (self-released, 2014)

Teen heartbreak is real. In 2014, there wasn't a high school on the south and west sides where you couldn't find teenage girls passionately singing “Somebody real is hard to find,” the opening lines of Tink's “Treat Me Like Somebody” from *Winter's Diary 2*. Since her debut in 2011, the rapper and singer-songwriter has been releasing mixtapes that teens would rush to download from DatPiff, but this 2014 project is what arguably propelled her name beyond Chicago. The essence of *Winter's Diary 2* reflects beloved 90s R&B, yet it's also relevant to the newer forms of heartbreak the Internet age introduced to relationships. —**JANAYA GREENE**

- ▶ **TOUPEE**, *Dinner Parties* (Rotted Tooth, 2013)
- ▶ **WOO PARK**, *Smokes* (self-released, 2014)
- ▶ **AVERY R. YOUNG**, *Tubman* (FPE, 2019)



34 Twenty-three-way tie, ten points each

- ▶ **AGAINST ME!**, *Transgender Dysphoria Blues* (Xtra Mile/Total Treble, 2014)
- ▶ **ARRIVER**, *Tsushima* (Bloodlust!, 2012)

The second full-length by Chicago heroes Arriver is a departure for metal: it's creative and interesting, rather than getting lost in an unthinking preoccupation with what's supposed to make metal “metal.” *Tsushima* is progressive in the truest sense—it draws

36 Twenty-five-way tie, eight points each

- ▶ **BURDENED**, *Crippled by Fear* (self-released, 2017)
- ▶ **DEAD RIDER**, *Chills on Glass* (Drag City, 2014)
- ▶ **MYKELE DEVILLE**, *Maintain* (No Trend, 2019)
- ▶ **THE FUNS**, *The Funs* (Manic Static, 2013)
- ▶ **HAKI**, *Positive* (self-released, 2014)
- ▶ **HALF GRINGA**, *Gruñona* (self-released, 2017)
- ▶ **JACKIE LYNN**, *Jackie Lynn* (Thrill Jockey, 2016)
- ▶ **MAHALIA JACKSON**, *Moving on Up a Little Higher* (Shanachie/Spirit Feel, 2016)

from many inspirations, including a 1905 naval battle during the Russo-Japanese War, rather than from just one—and it dances through its amalgam of styles without losing its identity. Identity is key for Arriver, and they derive their sense of artistic self in no small part from their mental intensity: the brawn of *Tsushima* is more multifaceted than single-minded, more extravagant than restrained, and more cerebral than visceral.

—JON ROSENTHAL

- **BRUISED**, *Rotten Codex* (Chicago Research, 2019)

“Things fall apart, the center cannot hold,” Cesar Robles Santacruz sings in “Satisfying Texture,” the delicately unwieldy postpunk jam at the heart of 2019’s *Rotten Codex*. For the past half decade, Bruised have been steadily gaining ground in the city’s punk scene with their brooding, goth-infused tunes, and this full-length shows the quintet at their musical peak. Unlike many punk releases, it’s never repetitive, swinging through a wide range of sounds—including the driving, intense “Psychic Stain” and the drony, industrial “No Neutral Architecture.” Bruised speak perfectly to the unbearable heaviness of these times, which we endure (to quote “Psychic Stain”) by “looking for an answer in the dark.” —KERRY CARDOZA

- **CAVE**, *Neverendless* (Drag City, 2011)

The theater of Cave comes through best in the nuances of their Krautrock-shaped psych, and 2011’s classic *Neverendless* captures the band at their absolutely most Motorik. To maintain the effectiveness of such exactly steady repetition, they have to set a mood by carefully modulating every sound swirling, twirling, and wriggling around the edges of the track—whether produced by Moog or man. The 14-plus-minute “This Is the Best,” with its ceaseless, almost taunting outro, and its follow-up, “Adam Roberts,” with its swelling synths and a jaunty organ line, do this with a precision that you might overlook if you allow the foursome’s rhythmic thrum to hypnotize you. —KEVIN WARWICK

- **CHIEF KEEF**, *Back From the Dead* (self-released, 2012)
- **ERRAUNT**, *The Portent* (self-released, 2015)
- **FIRE-TOOLZ**, *Drip Mental* (Hausu Mountain, 2017)

On her third album as Fire-Toolz, Angel

Marcloid cooks up a kitchen-sink combination of industrial, vaporwave, new age, dance pop, and black metal, peppered with AOL sign-on dings, cat meows, and that riff from “43% Burnt” by the Dillinger Escape Plan. At times, it sounds the way logging on has felt for the past couple years—that is, like slamming a nonstop torrent of news, opinions, and advertising into your brain at 100 miles per hour. It’s a testament to Marcloid’s skill and curatorial acumen that *Drip Mental* makes sense of it all, balancing its disorienting deluge against the exhilaration and joy of discovery. I found peace here when nothing else could soothe my overwhelmed mind. —ED BLAIR

- **FRAIL BODY**, *A Brief Memoriam* (Deathwish Inc., 2019)
- **ROBBIE FULKS**, *Gone Away Backward* (Bloodshot, 2013)

During the years that Robbie Fulks played regular Mondays at the Hideout—performing 250 staggeringly varied shows from 2010 through 2017—the club sometimes felt like a campfire gathering of sure-handed musicians fondly recalling tunes they’d heard long ago, breathing new life into their melodies with each pluck of a string. In the midst of that remarkable residency, Fulks released *Gone Away Backward*, a studio album that beautifully captures the craftsmanship and collaboration of his most intimate acoustic concerts. Deftly singing wise and witty lyrics that roam across the American landscape, Fulks made indelible 21st-century Chicago music built on memories of old-time Appalachia. —ROBERT LOERZEL

- **LA ARMADA**, *La Armada* (Fat Sandwich, 2012)

Radical hardcore band La Armada hail from the Dominican Republic, where they put down their roots in political activism and became a force in the country’s punk community. After relocating to Chicago in 2007, they released their self-titled full-length debut in 2012. The band pair their fierce sound, heavily influenced by grindcore and powerviolence, with raw anti-establishment lyrics (all in Spanish) that focus on immigration, colonialism, and class struggle. The guttural opening words of the first track, “Esclavitud Organica” translate to “Hypocrisy! Cynicism! Falsehood! Eat shit!”—describing the world in crisis that La Armada are fighting to destroy and save.

—S. NICOLE LANE

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► **DAMON LOCKS BLACK MONUMENT ENSEMBLE**, *Where Future Unfolds* (International Anthem, 2019)

In his merely extremely ambitious past projects, Damon Locks often used urgent, ethereal vocals that evoked June Tyson's work with Sun Ra, but for this Big Bang of ambition he's assembled a radical squadron of genius vocalists, instrumentalists, and dancers who draw on decades of Black Arts Movement audio, centuries of African music, and millennia-to-come of Afro-futurism. It seems too on-the-nose to use the word "art" to describe this album, considering that the second sleeve of its gatefold cover contains (in lieu of another piece of vinyl) a series of stunning prints by Locks. But this masterpiece is everything I want, and more than I expect, from art. —**JAKE AUSTEN**

► **LUCKI**, *Alternative Trap* (self-released, 2013)
► **MARKER**, *New Industries* (Audiographic, 2019)

In the 2010s, Ken Vandermark appeared on at least 100 records. The veteran saxophonist and clarinetist takes the Braxtonian imperative of self-documentation very seriously, and his recordings are rarely casual affairs—the quality goes in before the name goes on. But *New Industries* is his achievement of the decade. Made with Marker, a band of exciting younger Chicagoans that's also the newest group under his leadership, the 2019 album combines impeccable studio recordings with a companion CD of live versions that suggests how the scores invite reinvention each time out. With this ensemble, Vandermark has found the best vehicle yet for his compositional concept, funneling postpunk energy into exploding architecture. Issued in physical form on the reedist's own Audiographic label, *New Industries* sold out immediately. It resolutely requires a reprint. —**JOHN CORBETT**

► **MAKAYA MCCRAVEN**, *In the Moment* (International Anthem, 2015)
► **MAKAYA MCCRAVEN**, *Universal Beings* (International Anthem, 2018)
► **MELKBELLY**, *Pennsylvania* (Automatic Recordings, 2014)

Before becoming Chicago's most exciting rock band with the release of 2017's *Nothing Valley*, Melkbelly dropped a modest

six-song EP-almost-LP in 2014, limited to 500 copies, via now-defunct label Automatic Recordings. At one moment raw and unrelenting, at the next haunting and ethereal, *Pennsylvania* occasionally shows its stitches—it's clearly the work of an underground group trying to iron out its identity and ambitions. But more important, it also demonstrates the band's early willingness to experiment with mood, as well as their inventiveness in lashing their melodic pop structures with freakish rhythms and howling noise. These brilliant songs are the first evidence that Melkbelly would become one of Chicago's most important revelations of the 2010s. —**KEVIN WARWICK**

► **MIKE REED**, *Flesh & Bone* (482 Music, 2017)
► **RP BOO**, *Legacy* (Planet Mu, 2013)
► **SERENGETI**, *Kenny Dennis III* (Joyful Noise, 2014)

With the 2014 album *Kenny Dennis III*, rapper Serengeti was poised to wrap up the saga of the fictional Kenny Dennis (his uber-Chicagoan alter ego) and his partner Jules, but their tale continued through the rest of the 2010s. It made a midlife crisis sound wonderfully odd, and it made Odd Nosdam sound like one of the best producers in the game. The album's use of actor Anders Holm as Kenny's estranged friend/outside POV may also be the last time skits made sense on a hip-hop album. If you don't want an O'Doul's and a hot dog by the end of this one, you've listened to it wrong. —**JILL HOPKINS**

► **CHARLES JOSEPH SMITH**, *War of the Martian Ghosts* (Soooper, 2018)

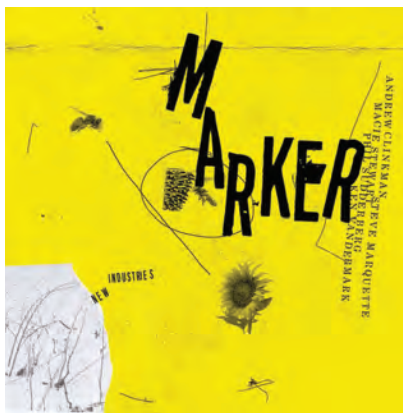
Dr. Charles Joseph Smith's instrumental concept album *War of the Martian Ghosts* refracts his story of war and ghosts through the lens of dissonance and decay. With little but its ten track titles and stereophonic piano, Smith transports the listener to a Martian landscape, strange and mystical, akin to that imagined in Robert Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land* or Philip K. Dick's *Martian Time-Slip*. Smith shapes and reshapes his virtuosic piano playing with fierce experimentation: chaotic time-signature jumps, ever-shifting motifs, occasional gothy synth accompaniment, a one-minute interlude of distant and unevenly spaced legato chord strikes, and even a 20-second punked-out track called "Recapitulation," whose tongue-in-

cheek take on the device of recapitulation in classical music demonstrates the sense of humor integral to Smith's life and work. —**NOAH JONES**

► **THIRD COAST PERCUSSION**, *Paddle to the Sea* (Cedille, 2018)

This gorgeous album contains a traditional Shona song, six marimba solos by Jacob Druckman, and Third Coast Percussion's own arrangements of Philip Glass's *Agua da Amazonia*. Its centerpiece, though, is a collective composition by the quartet that scores the 1966 short film *Paddle to the Sea*, storyboarded so tightly that big accents in the music land precisely atop dramatic cuts in the movie. Alternately lushly melodic and intriguingly knotty, filled with intricate multilayered rhythmic phasing that's simultaneously hypnotizing and baffling, *Paddle to the Sea* reminds us that the superhuman rigor that classical players struggle to achieve isn't an elitist aspiration—rather than cut off such musicians from "regular" people, it opens up new ways for their work to engage us, both intellectually and emotionally. —**PHILIP MONTORO**

► **TWO HOUSES**, *I Feel so Good I Can't Feel Myself* (Rad Girlfriend, 2016)
► **RYLEY WALKER**, *Primrose Green* (Dead Oceans, 2015)



33 Four-way tie, 11 points each

► **THE ATLAS MOTH**, *An Ache for the Distance* (Profound Lore, 2011)
► **INTO IT. OVER IT.**, *Intersections* (Triple Crown, 2013)
► **RETIREMENT PARTY**, *Strictly Speaking* (Tilde, 2017)
► **SLOW MASS**, *On Watch* (Land Land, 2018)

Whether you call it posthardcore, slowcore, emo, or indie rock, Slow Mass's debut full-length, *On Watch*, is definitely one thing: art. The 2018 album overflows with intricacies—it moves from a twinkling introduction ("On Watch I") to blistering chaos ("E.D.") and ends with a gentle, expansive poetic incantation ("G's End") that encapsulates the vastness of Slow Mass's expertise. I saw the band open two shows in 2019, and each time they delivered their set with cathartic potency. In the decade to come, they deserve to headline more shows of their own—and they've already started 2020 with two new singles. —**MADLINE HAPPOLD**

32

► **CIRCUIT DES YEUX**, *Reaching for Indigo* (Drag City, 2017) 11.5 points



31 Two-way tie, 12 points each

► **DEAD RIDER**, *The Raw Dents* (Drag City, 2011)

Led by Todd Rittmann, Dead Rider accomplish a delightfully disturbing perversion of rock 'n' roll that befits an alumnus of U.S. Maple and Cheer-Accident. On the band's second full-length, turgid bass synth, louche horns, and Rittmann's creepy, oleaginous croon and jagged spurts of guitar all contribute to an atmosphere of decadent, addictively groovy decay. Much of the music's distinctive feel comes from the drumming, shared here by Theo Katsaounis and his eventual replacement, Matt Espy: they stagger and stumble, slipping out of phase or just flat-out falling through the

floor, but they always snap right back on beat to let you know they meant to do that. As Hannibal Lecter has proved in other venues, deviance kept under tight control is often more effective than off-the-leash craziness. —**PHILIP MONTORO**

- **LUPE FIASCO**, *Tetsuo & Youth* (Atlantic/1st & 15th Entertainment, 2015)

30 Eight-way tie, 13 points each

- **CUPCAKKE**, *Ephorize* (self-released, 2018)
- **DISAPPEARS**, *Guider* (Kranky, 2011)
- **G HERBO**, *Ballin Like I'm Kobe* (Machine Entertainment Group/Cinematic/150 Dream Team, 2015)
- **KIDS THESE DAYS**, *Traphouse Rock* (self-released, 2012)
- **NEGATIVE SCANNER**, *Nose Picker* (Trouble in Mind, 2018)
- **SMINO**, *Blkswn* (Zero Fatigue/Downtown, 2017)
- **MAVIS STAPLES**, *If All I Was Was Black* (Anti-, 2017)
- **WEEKEND NACHOS**, *Worthless* (Deep Six, 2011)

Why waste money on anger-management classes or a gym membership when you can create one of the grooviest powerviolence records ever to emerge from Chicago's hardcore metal scene instead? In 2011, Weekend Nachos did just that with their fourth LP, *Worthless*. It's an unforgiving record fueled by a fury that can only be expressed with crushing layers of distortion and rage-filled lyrics. The band combine their merciless grooves with brutal hardcore breakdowns and sandwich them between some of the city's heaviest doom riffs to create a powerviolence masterpiece that couldn't have come from anything but the grit and grime of Chicago.

—**NIKKI ROBERTS**

29

- **TREE**, *Sunday School* (self-released, 2012) 13.5 points

Rapper-producer Tremain Johnson, aka Tree, can spin a symphony out of a single broken-sounding sample. To make what he calls "soul trap," he also cribs from mod-

ern pop songs, cracking and warping pieces of them till they sound like dusties, then looping them amid bustling percussion. He's also an arresting rapper and a wise, vivid lyricist, with an endearingly coarse voice that underlines his weary empathy. He dropped a streak of fantastic albums in the 2010s, but his hard-won critical breakthrough, *Sunday School*, is stacked with so many knockout tracks that it's era defining.

—**LEOR GALIL**



Kaina, *Next to the Sun*

28 Four-way tie, 14 points each

- **CSTVT**, *The Echo & the Light* (Tiny Engines, 2010)
- **KAINA**, *Next to the Sun* (Soooper, 2019)

In a music industry that enforces constant output, Kaina wants us to slow down. The act of feeling—and processing all the good and bad, complexity and confusion that comes with it—is the overarching theme of Kaina's first full-length, *Next to the Sun*. Her voice is smooth, her energy is calming, and her lyrics (which she writes herself) effortlessly bounce around the luscious melodies she sings. Kaina has all the makings of a star, and between her eager experimentation with musical composition and her celebration of identity and all that forms it, she's refreshingly undefinable. —**BIANCA BETANCOURT**

- **MAKO SICA**, *Essence* (La Société Expéditionnaire, 2012)

Mako Sica are one of Chicago's most genre-shattering bands, and on their finest album, 2012's *Essence*, they feed their

musical supercollider with jazz, psychedelic, experimental music, and more. They close the LP with the soundscape "Fate Deals a Hand," which stretches for more than 21 minutes, and side one's two sonic journeys are nearly as epic in scale—not unlike the outre experiments of Meddle-era Pink Floyd. Drummer Michael Kendrick augments his kit with all manner of bells, chimes, and cymbals, while Brent Fuscald adds basslike guitar, thumb piano, and clouds of whispered vocals. The final ingredient comes from genius guitarist Przemyslaw K. Drazek, whose textural waves of guitar and similarly treated trumpet lend a Morricone-esque soundtrack vibe to the album—and to Mako Sica's unique sound. —**STEVE KRAKOW**

- **MAVIS STAPLES**, *One True Vine* (Anti-, 2013)

27 Four-way tie, 15 points each

- **ADVANCE BASE**, *Nephew in the Wild* (Orindal, 2015)
- **JEAN DEAUX**, *Krash* (self-released/Empire, 2018)
- **GANSER**, *Odd Talk* (No Trend, 2018)

When Ganser released their full-length debut, *Odd Talk*, they were still relative newcomers in the city's music scene, but the four-piece had already established themselves as a band to watch. With the sleek synths, disjointed guitars, and plentiful grooves of *Odd Talk*, Ganser have crafted a smart take on postpunk that provides a breath of fresh air even as it nods to Chicago's noise-rock past. Not every band can hit a sweet spot between sophistication, trepidation, and weirdness, but even when Ganser grapple with difficult modern relationships and personal, political, and existential anxieties, they make it sound like a blast.

—**JAMIE LUDWIG**

- **NO MEN**, *Dear God, Bring the Doom* (Let's Pretend, 2016)

26 Five-way tie, 16 points each

- **DISAPPEARS**, *Lux* (Kranky, 2010)

Listening to *Lux* is like fighting a fever dream: the paranoia, the quickened

pulse, the winding line connecting beginning to end. Logically speaking, the full-length debut from a band who deliberately mischaracterized themselves as "CCR via Minor Threat" shouldn't have ended up among Chicago's musical masterstrokes of the past decade, but throughout their eight-year run, Disappears were always in the business of defying expectations. Riffs wobble like they're on sea legs, Brian Case's yawps sound tongue-tied and tipsy, and every drum fill pops like a pistol—more than an album, *Lux* is a postcard from another world. —**SHANNON NICO SHREIBAK**

- **GROWN UPS**, *More Songs* (Topshelf, 2010)
- **JEREMIH**, *Late Nights: The Album* (Def Jam, 2015)
- **OPEN MIKE EAGLE**, *Brick Body Kids Still Daydream* (Mello Music Group, 2017)
- **RUSSIAN CIRCLES**, *Memorial* (Sargent House, 2013)



25 Four-way tie, 17 points each

- **JAIMIE BRANCH**, *Fly or Die* (International Anthem, 2019)
- **SABA**, *Comfort Zone* (self-released, 2014)
- **TOUPEE**, *Leg Toucher* (Moniker, 2015)

Toupee's *Leg Toucher*, the four-piece's last full-length before disbanding, sounds like it was recorded mid-exorcism. Front woman Whitney Allen (now Whitney Fraggassi) pivots from sludgy sneers to incoherent shrieks, and the mix might as well have been run through a blender set to "puree." Despite all this, the chaotic sound that Allen crafts with bandmates Nick Hagen, Mark Fraggassi, and Scott Frigo still does exactly what they want it to do. Swirling goth-rock guitar riffs create an ominous backdrop, but

the horror punk of “Mommy Is a Mummy” and “The Spider That Lives in Your Hair” channels Halloween-store camp rather than attempting actual terror. —ANNA WHITE

- **KANYE WEST**, *Yeezus* (Def Jam/Roc-a-Fella, 2013)

24

- **JEREMIH**, *Late Nights: The Mixtape* (self-released, 2012) 17.5 points

23

- **VARIOUS ARTISTS**, *Bangs & Works Vol. 1* (Planet Mu, 2010) 18 points

In the beginning, there was house, which borrowed from breakdancing to help form juke—and then Chicago gave birth to footwork, a dizzyingly fast and weird dance style accompanied by a similarly fast and weird turntablist-approved soundtrack. British electronic musician Mike Paradinas gathered 25 cuts by Chicago producers in 2010 and kicked off the decade with *Bangs & Works Vol. 1* (on his own Planet Mu label), a genre-defining compilation of footwork music that includes innovators RP Boo and DJ Rashad. *Vol. 1* helped some of the producers on its roster undertake international tours, and in 2011 it begat *Bangs & Works Vol. 2*. —SALEM COLLO-JULIN

22 Three-way tie, 19 points each

- **AMERICAN FOOTBALL**, *American Football* (LP3) (Polyvinyl, 2019)
- **BEN LAMAR GAY**, *Downtown Castles Can Never Block the Sun* (International Anthem, 2018)
- **PURPLE MOUNTAINS**, *Purple Mountains* (Drag City, 2019)

21 Three-way tie, 20 points each

- **MEAT WAVE**, *The Incessant* (SideOneDummy, 2017)
- **MEAT WAVE**, *Meat Wave* (Hawthorne Street/Let's Pretend, 2012)

Meat Wave's self-titled debut was never supposed to be an album. The band record-

ed nine songs with the intent of sprinkling them across a series of split seven-inches. When that fell through, the trio—guitarist-vocalist Chris Sutter, bassist Joe Gac, and drummer Ryan Wizniak—pieced together an album. From the caustic guitar stabs of “Keep Smoking” to the triumphant explosion that closes “Panopticon,” *Meat Wave* merge the catchiness of Chicago punk with the austerity of the city's noise-rock greats, resulting in an album that doesn't just pay homage to the past but also uses that history to pave a new path forward. —DAVID ANTHONY

- **GREG WARD**, *Touch My Beloved's Thought* (Greenleaf, 2016)

20 Two-way tie, 21 points each

- **RATBOYS**, *GN* (Topshelf, 2017)
- **TASHA**, *Alone at Last* (Father/Daughter, 2018)

19

- **YEESH**, *Confirmation Bias* (Tiny Engines, 2016) 22 points

18 Three-way tie, 23 points each

- **ANGEL BAT DAWID**, *The Oracle* (International Anthem, 2019)
- **MELKBELLY**, *Nothing Valley* (Wax Nine, 2017)
- **NEGATIVE SCANNER**, *Negative Scanner* (Trouble in Mind, 2015)

17

- **OHMME**, *Parts* (Joyful Noise, 2018) 24 points

Singers and multi-instrumentalists Sima Cunningham and Macie Stewart birthed their debut full-length as Ohmme in 2018. *Parts* is a moody, avant-garde, psychedelic landslide that plunges you into the depths of some big questions: identity and the expectations that govern it, the meaning of consumption, and mislaid faith toward the end of a tumultuous decade. The album balances tensions and contortions against each other, whether personal or political, instrumental or vocal. Ohmme aren't exact-

ly obscure—they lay it all out there, albeit in their own idiosyncratic way—but they build mystery all the same, stoking anticipation that buzzes and lingers even in the spaces between notes and songs. Sometimes Cunningham and Stewart provide answers to the questions they raise, but it's more fun to listen to the album and arrive at your own solutions to their lyrical puzzles.

—JESSI ROTI



Ohmme, *Parts*

16

- **DEHD**, *Water* (Fire Talk, 2019) 25 points

15 Two-way tie, 26 points each

- **MICK JENKINS**, *The Water[s]* (Cinematic Music Group, 2014)
- **WHITNEY**, *Light Upon the Lake* (Secretly Canadian, 2016)

14

- **NONAME**, *Room 25* (self-released, 2018) 27 points

13

- **ONO**, *Spooks* (Moniker, 2015) 31 points

In 1983 the *Reader* called Ono “Chicago's best-kept secret.” Here we are, nearly four decades later, still blessed more than we deserve. What is this blessing? Fearless avant-garde art that demands our surrender, nothing less. Ono drag us into the darkest conflicts of American history, but if you stay with them—and the grooving bass lines

ensure you will—they speak to our willingness to be called. There's nothing like a live Ono performance, but *Spooks* is a grand offering, recorded by two bands playing at once in counterpoint. The album is cinematic in its narrative construction, which gives shape to furious noise that sounds the emotional arc of characters voiced by poet-performer Travis, who spits, sasses, and bel-lows powerful, terrible words. Each listen unearths a new story arc, a new deviant sound, a new foundation beneath its noise, like sweeping a dirt floor. “You will never cover dirt!” —SASHA TYCKO

12

- **ANGEL OLSEN**, *Half Way Home* (Bathetic, 2012) 31.5 points

11 Two-way tie, 34 points each

- **LALA LALA**, *The Lamb* (Hardly Art, 2018)

Lala Lala's *The Lamb* is an immersive and illustrative experience, combining layered vocals, fearless exploration of varied sonic territory, and Lillie West's knack for honest and introspective storytelling. The London-born, Chicago-based songwriter showcases her creative growth on this sophomore effort, blending genres and ranging across the emotional spectrum on the album's 12 tracks—whether the coaxing subtlety of “Scary Movie” or the jarring introduction of “I Get Cut.” Throughout the record, melodies leap out that will stick with you long after you've finished listening.

—RACHEL ZYZDA

- **TWIN PEAKS**, *Wild Onion* (Grand Jury, 2014)

10 Two-way tie, 37 points each

- **C.H.E.W.**, *Feeding Frenzy* (Iron Lung, 2018)

Feeding Frenzy is a relentless assault of D-beat hardcore from C.H.E.W.—the payoff after a series of small releases brimming with promise. The group—comprising three Orlando transplants and a front person who'd never sung in a band before—are as brutal as they are seamless. Ben Rudolph, Russell Harrison, and Jono Giralto (the

aforementioned transplants) click together with the intuitive precision of three players who know and understand one another's inner workings. Doris Jeane's raspy, mocking growl grabs listeners by the throat in confrontation and anguish. —TIM CRISP

- ▶ **NNAMDI**, *Drool* (Sooper, Father/Daughter, 2017)



9

- ▶ **CHANCE THE RAPPER**, *Coloring Book* (self-released, 2016) 40 points

8

- ▶ **JAMILA WOODS**, *Heavn* (Jagjaguwar/Closed Sessions, 2016) 51 points

7

- ▶ **JAMILA WOODS**, *Legacy!* (Jagjaguwar/Closed Sessions, 2019) 58.5 points

6

- ▶ **CHIEF KEEF**, *Finally Rich* (Interscope/Glory Boyz Entertainment, 2012) 65.5 points

5

- ▶ **DJ RASHAD**, *Double Cup* (Hyperdub, 2013) 71.5 points

DJ Rashad and his Teklife comrades poured decades of dance music into *Double Cup*. Its soaring vocal samples and pulsing kicks convey every emotion it's possible to feel while your sweat cools in the 4 AM air: pride, lust, anxiety, fear, ecstasy, bravado, and (by the time it concludes with "I'm Too Hi") utter intoxication. The album is haunted by the viscous trinity of highs alluded to in "Drank, Kush, Barz"—ironic companions to the record's high-speed beats. Though Rashad's time with us was cut short, his legacy will live on through a lifetime of tracks, a generation of inspired producers, and the footwork masterpiece *Double Cup*. —JACK RIEDY



4

- ▶ **KANYE WEST**, *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* (Def Jam/Roc-a-Fella, 2010) 73 points

3

- ▶ **CHANCE THE RAPPER**, *Acid Rap* (self-released, 2013) 85 points

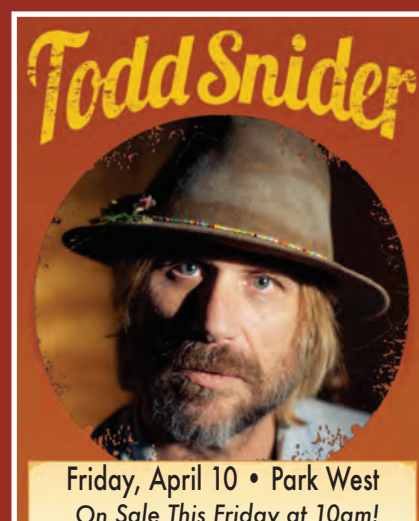
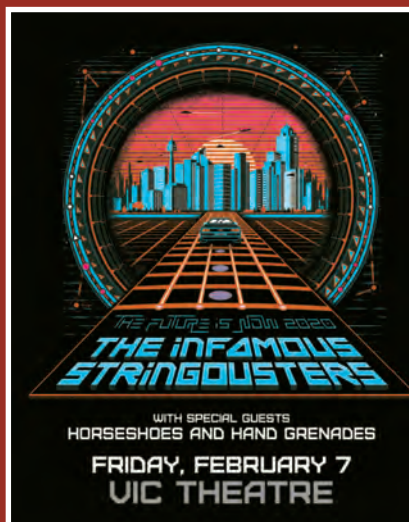
2

- ▶ **NONAME**, *Telefone* (self-released, 2016) 98 points

1

- ▶ **SABA**, *Care for Me* (self-released, 2018) 101 points

jam presents



PICK OF THE WEEK

Cult emo darlings the Anniversary celebrate 20 years since their sudden rise and fall



© ZACH BAUMAN

THE ANNIVERSARY, MODEL STRANGER, WET TROPICS

Thu 1/30, 8:30 PM, Lincoln Hall, 2424 N. Lincoln, \$29, \$25 in advance, 18+

IN JANUARY 2020, as the likes of Sunny Day Real Estate and the Get Up Kids led emo's second wave, a group of five young adults from Lawrence, Kansas, calling themselves the Anniversary released a striking debut. Built around the dueling guitars and vocals of Josh Berwanger and Justin Roelofs and backed by the infectious Moog lines and high vocal harmonies of Adrienne Verhoeven, *Designing a Nervous Breakdown* (Vagrant) earned the quintet a cult following. Widely considered one of the best emo albums of the era, the LP was also their last in that style—the Anniversary's second and final record detoured into classic rock and indie psychedelia, with Moog replaced by organ and piano and its aggressive riffs and angsty roars traded for

Tom Petty twang and slightly more subdued vocals. Internal conflicts broke up the Anniversary in 2004; in 2016, minus Roelofs, they reunited for a short tour. Now those members are back to perform a handful of two-set shows around the midwest, with their first sets consisting of *Breakdown* start to finish and the second focusing on its follow-up, *Her Majesty* (Vagrant, 2002). The Anniversary may not have experienced an American Football-level resurgence, but emo aficionados have bestowed a similar posthumous respect on their first album. Considering the band's history, this might be the last time to hear its songs (and them) live. —SCOTT MORROW

THURSDAY30

THE ANNIVERSARY See *Pick of the Week* at left. *Model Stranger* and *Wet Tropics* open. 8:30 PM, Lincoln Hall, 2424 N. Lincoln, \$29, \$25 in advance. 18+

LEA BERTUCCI *Saariselka* headlines; *Lea Bertucci and Brokeback Duo* open. 9:30 PM, Hideout, 1354 W. Wabansia, \$12, \$10 in advance. 21+

Sometimes **Lea Bertucci** treats architecture as an extension of her instruments. For the 2019 album *Resonant Field* (NNA Tapes), the composer, sound designer, and instrumentalist brought her alto saxophone into the confines of the *Marine A Grain Elevator in Silo City*, a collection of three such elevators in Buffalo, New York. The structure's size—it's 13 feet wide and 90 feet high—resulted in a 12-second natural delay that let Bertucci play with or against her own improvisations. In postproduction, she layered her reeds' long tones, twisting trills, and decaying echoes over field recordings and other musicians to vertiginous, psychedelic effect. For last year's *Phase Eclipse* (Astral Sprits), she used a more immediate approach, putting her fingers directly on rolling tape in order to alter the pitch and progress of Amirtha Kidambi's voice. On her current tour, Bertucci intends to use woodwinds, tapes, and electronics to draw silo-size sonic experiences out of the smaller spaces she's playing. This concert, part of the Hideout's Resonance Series of experimental music, also features a rare duo performance by **Brokeback**, with Areif Sless-Kitain's percussion accompanying the melodic six-string electric bass of band-leader Douglas McCombs. Headlining the show is **Saariselka**, a duo of singer-keyboardist Marielle Jakobson (ex-Date Palms) and pedal steel guitarist Chuck Johnson. —BILL MEYER

GERRIT HATCHER GROUP *Jake Wark* headlines. 9 PM, *Elastic*, 3429 W. Diversey, second floor, \$10. ALL

Chicago has a rich tenor sax tradition—Gene Ammons, Johnny Griffin, Von Freeman, Fred Anderson, and so on. With tradition comes prescription; Chicago tenors, to fit the mold, need to be able to summon a broad tone, a bluesy vibe, and a steady stream of improvisational ideas. Local saxophonist Gerrit Hatcher has no trouble living up to those demands. The naked sound of his horn, documented on three solo albums, ranges from ear-drilling high notes to door-blocking low end. On last year's *Burnt Pan Rolling Boil* (Kettle Hole), Hatcher builds up motifs incrementally, getting plenty of mileage from one notion before moving to the next. But on the brand-new *The Good Instinct of the Morning* (also on Kettle Hole), his first effort as a band-leader, Hatcher also shows an affinity for those second-wave free jazz saxophonists who recorded for ESP-Disk; the album includes "Man Alone," which originally appeared on Charles Tyler's 1967 LP for the storied avant-garde label. On that



NacroBats @ PUGS ATOMZ

track, the horn-heavy lineup of Hatcher's band—which includes cornetist Ben LaMar Gay, tenor saxophonist Keefe Jackson, bassist Katie Ernst, and drummer Julian Kirshner—and the rippling, high-energy improvisations they spin out of the tune's gospel-tinged theme and Hatcher's own melodies

recall Tyler's associate Albert Ayler. —**BILL MEYER**

METH. *Greet Death and Lume open. 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western, \$12, \$10 in advance. 21+*

Loading up a Meth. song is a prelude to being viscerally blasted; the local six-piece, which debuted in 2017 with *The Children Are Watching*, operate at full boil 100 percent of the time as they blend power noise, metal, mathcore, hardcore, and straight-up screaming. In 2018, founder Seb Alvarez (Cadence Fox, Tweak) told the blog *Open Mind Saturated Brain* that he's always wanted to call a project Meth. because of the word's dark, uncontrolled implications. His other projects also suggest a level of hyperactivity—and on some, such as *Liberal Scum's* recorded-in-90-minutes antifascist work *White Amerikkka*, he's even more direct. Meth. released their second full-length, *Mother of Red Light* (Prosthetic), in August, and it's a masterpiece of complex aggression that never quite numbs out the listener even as it overloads the senses. —**MONICA KENDRICK**

NACROBATS 9 PM, Emporium Wicker Park, 1366 N. Milwaukee. 21+ **FREE**

Hyperprolific rapper and Culture Power45 label co-owner Marcellous "Infinito 2017" Lovelace and Chicago hip-hop scene player Sterling "Pugs Atomz" Price are both former members of the NacroBats crew, and when Lovelace asked Pugs last year about releasing a vinyl compilation of old NacroBats tracks, it kicked off a wave of celebrations that will continue through 2020. Pugs founded NacroBats as a Kenwood Academy student in 1993, and the group

ballooned to around 200 members before dissolving in 2003. Many of those connected to the crew have gone on to leave their marks on the cultural landscape here and around the country—including Pugs, Psalm One, Offwhyte, and Open Mike Eagle, all of whom provided archival material for November's NacroBats compilation, *A in the Square*. (It's packaged with the book *A Love Supreme*, a must-have history of the group's journey.) For this NacroBats reunion show, Pugs recruited a crowd of former members, among them Psalm One, Thaione Davis, Cos G, Rift Napalm, Offwhyte, Kao Ra Zen, and the groups Centric I.E. and 1993 (aka Roger Rodriguez and Brian Nevado, co-owners of Loop streetwear shop Jugernaut). They'll perform solo and collaborative songs in a round-robin-style set, and Pugs will also screen a preview of a forthcoming NacroBats documentary. Given how many of the people who joined the crew in their youth are still involved in the city's culture, this reunion would make a great hook for the first chapter of the next NacroBats book. —**LEOR GALIL**

FRIDAY31

HARDY Sean Stemaly opens. 8:45 PM, Joe's Bar, 940 W. Weed, sold out. 21+

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- 2.10 **CHI-TOWN SINGS:**
BRITISH INVASION
- 2.11 **MIKI HOWARD** MIKI SINGS BILLIE

- 2.12 **PATRIZIO BUANNE**
- 2.13-15 **10,000 MANIACS**
- 2.16 **ADAM WEINER OF LOW CUT CONNIE**
- 2.18 **MIKI HOWARD** FEAT. DONNA ALLEN
- 2.19 **THE FOUR C NOTES**
FRANKIE VALLI TRIBUTE
- 2.20 **RYAN MONTBLEAU**
- 2.25 **FATOUmata DIAWARA**

UPCOMING SHOWS

- 2.7-8 **KINDRED THE FAMILY SOUL**
- 2.16 **CHICAGO PHILHARMONIC BRUNCH**
- 2.21 **KEITH WASHINGTON**
- 2.22 **MYSTICK KREWE OF LAFF MARDI GRAS BASH** FEAT. BONERAMA & BIG SHOULDERS BRASS BAND
- 2.23-24 **ANDREA GIBSON**
- 2.26 **RAUL MIDÓN AND LIONEL LOUEKE**
- 2.27 **FREDDY JONES BAND** WITH BRETT WISCONS
- 2.29 **DREW EMMITT & VINCE HERMAN OF LEFTOVER SALMON**
- 3.1 **CORKY SIEGEL'S CHAMBER BLUES** FEAT. ERNIE WATTS AND GORAN IVANOVIC
- 3.2 **MARQUIS HILL** MERIT SCHOOL OF MUSIC BENEFIT
- 3.3 **CYRILLE AIMEE**
- 3.4 **THE IDES OF MARCH** FEAT. JIM PETERIK
- 3.5+6 **COWBOY JUNKIES**
- 3.8 **WE BANJO 3**
- 3.9 **JACK BROADBENT**
- 3.10 **ANA POPOVIC**

FEB
5



STORM LARGE
OF PINK MARTINI

FEB
6



ROBERT RANDOLPH & THE FAMILY BAND

FEB
9



THE MANHATTAN TRANSFER

FEB
17



DONAVON FRANKENREITER
WITH CHRISTINA HOLMES

continued from 37

tropes from 80s and 90s hits—drinking cold beer, driving trucks, praying, partying, feeling heartbreak—and bulk them up with hip-hop beats, hyperslick production, and catchy hooks that sound engineered in a lab. Twenty-nine-year-old Mississippi native Hardy (aka Michael Hardy) began his career as one of Nashville’s song scientists; he was a cowriter for bro-band duo Florida Georgia Line, then worked on smash singles by the likes of Blake Shelton and Dallas Smith. But his real moment in the sun came with last year’s gloriously stupid earworm “Redneck,” a song of his own where he boasted about the size of his hometown (small) and the mounted bass on his wall (big) over drum machines, organs, and twangy yet spaced-out guitars. At the end of last year, Hardy released *Hixtape Vol. 1*, a ten-song, collaboration-heavy collection that includes cameos by Keith Urban, Morgan Wallen, and Zakk Wylde. Whether or not you’re into songs about hunting deer and drinking beer for breakfast, you have to admit that Hardy’s voice is the loudest one calling across country music’s glitzy new frontier. —**LUCA CIMARUSTI**

MICK JENKINS *Earthgang* headlines. 10 PM, House of Blues, 329 N. Dearborn, sold out. 17+

With his 2014 breakout release, *The Water[s]*, Chicago rapper Mick Jenkins demonstrated that his

complex vision and deep lyrics benefit from the large canvas of a full-length record. That said, he cooks on EPs too. At the top of January, he dropped *The Circus* (Free Nation/Cinematic Music Group), which despite running less than 20 minutes provides him with plenty of time for clever verses. Atop the sleepy synths of “Different Scales,” Jenkins surveys hip-hop’s complicated landscape, framing his observations with a reference to Chief Keef’s underground staple “Faneto”: “Sosa been call this shit here the zoo,” he raps with levelheaded clarity and an unruffled flow. “Multiple elephants in the room, ain’t nothing new / Poachers done settled in, they using sedatives, too.” Investing in his craft and community has taken Jenkins far, and will no doubt carry him further. —**LEOR GALIL**

SAINT ICKY Part of the Badluck Records Coat Drive. *Nightfreak*, *Deep Crush*, *Chuck Trash*, *Rapscallion*, and *Badluck DJs* open. 10 PM, direct message @badluck_records on Instagram for venue address, admission is a donation of \$10 or a winter coat. 

Local label Badluck Records is celebrating its first birthday with a showcase at a Logan Square DIY venue. Badluck, whose garish yet artful sound takes Warped Tour to grad school, has invited the bands Nightfreak, Rapscallion, and Deep Crush to share



Saint Icky
 ZACH JAROSZ



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- 01/30 - RYAN MCMULLAN
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- 02/05 - ILLITERATE LIGHT
- 02/06 - THE HOODIE LIFE
- 02/07 - AJANI JONES
- 02/08 - LUCIDIOUS
- 02/09 - KEMBE X
- 02/10 - BODEGA
- 02/11 - THE BLUE STONES
- 02/12 - THE FAMILY CREST
- 02/13 - CHEEKFACE
- 02/13 - THE JUNGLE GIANTS
- 02/14 - MALIBU MIITCH
- 02/15 - LONGWAVE
- 02/15 - ELIZABETH MOEN
- 02/18 - TENDER
- 02/18 - REUBEN AND THE DARK
- 02/19 - KOJEY RADICAL
- 02/20 - SUSTO
- 02/21 - SLOW HOLLOW

- 02/22 - BIG SOMETHING ANDY FRASCO
- 02/24 - PAPOOZ
- 02/25 - ANNA OF THE NORTH
- 02/26 - ZACK VILLERE
- 02/28 - MIJA [LIVE]
- 02/28 - RATBOYS
- 02/29 - AARON KAMM AND THE ONE DROPS
- 02/29 - TELEFON TEL AVIV
- 03/04 - TÉLÉPOPMUSIK [LIVE]
- 03/05 - AVIVA
- 03/05 - REMEMBER JONES
- 03/06 - LUCKY CHOPS
- 03/07 - BEGONIA
- 03/08 - BILLY RAFFOUL
- 03/09 - LOWER DENS
- 03/10 - AUDREY MIKA
- 03/10-11 - SHELLAC
- 03/11 - GLADIE
- 03/13 - GASHI
- 03/13 - ADAM GREEN

- 03/15 - BAD BAD HATS
- 03/16 - BLANKS
- 03/17 - BENDIGO FLETCHER
- 03/18 - ÁSGEIR
- 03/19 - R.LUM.R
- 03/19 - COX N’ CRENDOR LIVE!
- 03/20 - ZOOFUNKYOU
- 03/20 - LITTLE PEOPLE FRAMEWORKS
- 03/21 - PALEHOUND
- 03/21 - VUNDABAR
- 03/22 - THE SONDER BOMBS
- 03/24-25 - DEAFHEAVEN
- 03/25 - DOTAN
- 03/26 - UMI
- 03/26 - VÉRITÉ
- 03/27 - EVAN GIIA
- 03/31 - ABERDEEN
- 04/01 - THE MURDER CAPITAL
- 04/01 - TOMMY €A\$H
- 04/02 - DAN MANGAN
- 04/02 - DEEPER

TICKETS AND INFO AT WWW.LH-ST.COM

MUSIC

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THE SECRET HISTORY OF CHICAGO MUSIC

PIVOTAL CHICAGO MUSICIANS THAT SOMEHOW HAVE NOT GOTTEN THEIR JUST DUES by PLASTIC CRIMEWAVE



John Littlejohn

WINTER BLUES

BLUESY SLIDE GUITARISTS DON'T GET MORE ELECTRIC AND RAW THAN JOHN LITTLEJOHN. BORN JOHN WESLEY FUNCHESS ON APRIL 16, 1931, HE WAS RAISED IN THE COUNTRY AROUND JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI. HE CAUGHT BLUES FEVER AS A KID AFTER SEEING LOCAL GUITARIST & FAMILY FRIEND HENRY MARTIN AT A FISH FRY, AND AFTER HIS FATHER WON A GUITAR AT CRAPS. THE FIRST TUNE JOHN LEARNED WAS "BABY, PLEASE DON'T GO" (WHICH HE'D HEARD LIGHT-NIN' HOPKINS PLAY). AT FIRST HE CARRIED WATER IN THE FIELDS, BUT AFTER GOING TO JACKSON IN 1946 HE WORKED HAULING ICE. IN '49 HE TOOK A JOB CHOPPING COTTON IN ARKANSAS, AND FOR TWO YEARS HE LIVED AN ITINERANT LIFE, PICKING CHERRIES IN UPSTATE NEW YORK, DRIVING A BULLDOZER IN ROCHESTER, AND EVENTUALLY ARRIVING IN EARLY INDIANA—WHERE HE STARTED PLAYING GUITAR AT A ROADHOUSE. IN 1951 HE PUT TOGETHER A BAND AT JOULET'S CLUB '99 THAT EARNED \$350 A WEEK, MORE THAN HE'D EVER MADE IN HIS LIFE, WITH A COUNTRY-BLUES STYLE SIMILAR TO THAT OF SLIDE GOD ELMORE JAMES. HE SOON BECAME A CHICAGO SCENE REGULAR. JOHN GIGGED WITH JIMMY REED AND HOWLIN' WOLF, BUT EVEN WITH WOLF'S SUPPORT HE COULDN'T GET SIGNED AT CHESS, DESPITE 10 YEARS OF VISITS TO THE LABEL'S STUDIO (HE STRUCK OUT AT VEE JAY TOO). HIS FIRST 455 CAME OUT IN 1966 ON THE TINY MARGARET & TERRELL LABELS, AND HIS DEBUT LP, "JOHN LITTLEJOHN'S CHICAGO BLUES STARS," DROPPED IN 1968 ON ARHOLIE. BLUESWAY PUT OUT HIS NEXT ALBUM, 1973'S "FUNKY FROM CHICAGO," WHICH JOHN FOLLOWED WITH THE LIVE "DREAM" ON MGM IN '77, CUT AT MA BEA'S LOUNGE WITH LONGTIME COMRADES LARRY & ARON BURTON. HE APPEARED ON THE 1979 COMPILATION "SULTANS OF THE SLIDE GUITAR" A LONGSIDE GIANTS HOUND DOG TAYLOR, KOKO TAYLOR, AND ROBERT NIGHTHAWK, AND IN 1982 HE & HARPIST CAREY BELL RELEASED A LIVE LP RECORDED IN JAPAN. JOHN'S LAST RECORDING WAS THE 1992 ALBUM "WHEN YOUR BEST FRIEND TURNS THEIR BACK ON YOU," AND HE DIED FROM KIDNEY FAILURE ON FEBRUARY 1, 1994.

TUNE INTO THE RADIO VERSION OF "THE SECRET HISTORY OF CHICAGO MUSIC" ON "OUTSIDE THE LOOP" ON WGN RADIO 720 AM, SATURDAY AT 6AM WITH HOST MIKE STEPHEN. COMMENTS, IDEAS To plsticcw@hotmail.com ARCHIVED @ OUTSIDETHELOOPRADIO.COM

the bill with Badluck rappers Chuck Trash and Saint Icky. Icky has hit his stride since joining the Badluck roster, releasing *Saintiva Mixtape* in July and *Heavy Metal for Meditation, Vol. 1* in October. The latter project is a heshier-friendly burst of hip-hop angst filtered through pop-punk melodies that sets a high bar for the next volume. Icky and Trash both plan to debut new songs at this show, so their label's second year is already looking bright. And Badluck is giving back to its hometown too: the venue will accept donations of winter coats in exchange for entry. —JACK RIEDY

TUESDAY4

SESSA Corolla and Seres de Luz. 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 2100 W. Belmont, \$13. 17+

São Paulo singer-songwriter and guitarist Sessa called his 2019 debut *Grandeza* (Boiled), which means "greatness" in Portuguese. The record lives up to its title; Sessa's stripped-down, minimalist bossa nova is both dreamy and raw. His beguiling combination of amateurishness and suaveness, ➔

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FEBRUARY 11 FEBRUARY 12	HEISENBERG UNCERTAINTY PLAYERS 7PM RC BIG BAND 7PM PROSPECT FOUR 9:30PM FLABBY HOFFMAN SHOW 8PM ELIZABETH'S CRAZY LITTLE THING FEATURING HOMESBOYBEAUTIFUL 9PM FEBRUARY 13 FEBRUARY 14 FEBRUARY 15 FEBRUARY 16 FEBRUARY 17 FEBRUARY 18 FEBRUARY 19 FEBRUARY 20 FEBRUARY 21 FEBRUARY 22 FEBRUARY 23
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MUSIC

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as well as the juxtaposition of Spanish guitars with female backing vocals and Afro-Brazilian percussion, recalls Baden Powell and Vinicius de Moraes's great 1966 *Os Afro Sambas*. "Flor do Real" could almost be an outtake from that record, if not for its trippy, sexy lyrics: "To live in the guts of those who make us horny / It's good / Fucking is the pleasure of sound," Sessa and his backing vocalists sing (in Portuguese) with detached innocence. On "Orgia," Sessa has a back-and-forth with a woman, their voices echoing and entwining over isolated, supple bass. Other songs get a little noisier: "Tanto" starts as quiet folk and about halfway through turns into the sort of spiky, dissonant tropicália practiced by Brazilian contemporaries such as Negro Leo. Sessa's mysterious, conspicuous vision is flamboyant yet laid-back; he lets you know he can seduce you without even trying. —NOAH BERLATSKY

WEDNESDAY5

YBN CORDAE Guests had not been announced at press time. 6:30 PM, Avondale Music Hall, 3336 N. Milwaukee, \$32. 

Since hip-hop seized control of pop music, artists such as Juice Wrld, Lil Nas X, and Lil Tecca have rocketed to fame with little industry experi-

ence. Even among this wave of fast-breaking acts, 22-year-old Cordae Dunston—aka YBN Cordae—has cut a distinctive path. While growing up in Prince George's County, Maryland, in the mid-2010s, Cordae released a few mixtapes as Entendre, which he'd later call "the worst rap name in history." He enrolled at Towson University in 2015, got a job at a nearby TGI Friday's, and numbed himself on Xanax—until three years later, when he dropped out, quit the restaurant, and embraced some rappers from the YBN collective whom he'd befriended through social media. In 2018 he re-emerged as YBN Cordae, released remixes of tracks by Eminem and J. Cole, and made his live debut at popular Miami hip-hop festival Rolling Loud, appearing during a set by his crew's figurehead, YBN Nahmir. Since then, he's become the collective's star: his debut full-length, July's *The Lost Boy* (Atlantic/YBN), peaked at number nine on the *Billboard* 200 and earned two Grammy nominations, including Best Rap Album. Cordae's clean, understated rapping elevates his intelligent writing and down-to-earth charm, giving him a broad appeal that not even milquetoast mainstream gatekeepers can resist. He's an adaptable vocalist, and on *The Lost Boy* he jumps between stylistically scattered instrumentals so nonchalantly it's like he doesn't even notice the differences; when the vitriolic beat on "Broke as Fuck" transitions into a sumptuous soul melody, he switches gears as smoothly and flawlessly as somebody who's been doing it since birth. —LEOR GALIL 

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GOSSIP WOLF

A furry ear to the ground of the local music scene

YOU'RE NOT ALONE if climate change makes you feel like you're in a sci-fi dystopia. Chicago public artists **Luftwerk**, on the other hand, were inspired by a trillion-ton iceberg the size of Maryland that split from Antarctica in 2017, and in response they created the multimedia project **Requiem: A White Wanderer**. It includes sculptures that resemble shards of ice, as well as a sound installation and a collaborative piece for orchestra and voice, the latter created with composer and former Chicagoan **Katherine Young**. Both audio components are based on seismic recordings of the berg's slow disintegration, and on how that might sound to sea animals. The installation will use the 22-channel sound system at **Jay Pritzker Pavilion**, where it runs Friday, January 31, till Sunday, February 2, from 11 AM to 6 PM each day. All weekend, guided "sound walks" will help visitors appreciate the installation, and on Saturday the Pritzker stage hosts concerts of Young's collaborative piece at 5 PM and 7 PM (the latter followed by a panel discussion).

Last year local producers **Azarias**, **DJ Skoli**, and **Loony Is Normal** launched the series **Kinky Yeti**, joining the likes of Open Beats and Push Beats on the city's beat scene—aka its arty instrumental hip-hop community. Kinky Yeti stands out among local events partly because it books rappers and singers, not just producers. On Saturday, February 1, Kinky Yeti throws itself a first-anniversary party at **Bourbon on Division**; the three cofounders will perform, along with rappers Sudo Black, CMoneyWave, Kilt Karter, Vantablac Sol, Martell DB, and Nabuddah.

Rogers Park record and stereo shop **Audio Archaeology** (1324 W. Devon) is closing for good—Saturday, February 1, is its last day. On Sunday, the store began selling its inventory at a deep discount, with new records between 30 and 50 percent off. Owner **John Arnsdorff** couldn't be reached for comment by press time.

—J.R. NELSON AND LEOR GALIL

Got a tip? Tweet @Gossip_Wolf or e-mail gossipwolf@chicagoreader.com.

WOLF BY KEITH HERZIK

CHICAGO SHOWS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT IN THE WEEKS TO COME

ALL AGES FREE



Chaz Cardigan ALEXANDER KALYK

NEW

Arcade 88, Chance & the Arrow, Jonfin, Boundary Waters 2/6, 8 PM, Burlington

Avail, Dillinger Four 3/12, 7 PM, Concord Music Hall, on sale Fri 1/31, noon

Bayside, Senses Fail, Hawthorne Heights, Can't Swim 5/30, 7 PM, Concord Music Hall, 17+

Mwata Bowden's One Foot In-One Foot Out Ensemble 2/7, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+

Jack Broadbent, Benjamin Jaffe 3/9, 8 PM, City Winery

BTS 6/5-6/6, 7:30 PM, Soldier Field, on sale Wed 2/5, 3 PM

Chaz Cardigan 4/6, 7:30 PM, Beat Kitchen

Cheekface, Noiseland, Ferret Bueller 2/13, 8 PM, Schubas, 18+

Combo Chimbita 3/12, 9:30 PM, Hideout, on sale Fri 1/31, 10 AM

Chris Cresswell 3/23, 6 PM, Cobra Lounge

Rodney Crowell 3/28, 8 PM, City Winery

Cryptic Wisdom, Illvibe, Moses 3/11, 6:30 PM, Subterranean

Leo Dan 3/18, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Deeper, Tenci 4/2, 8:30 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+

Disturbed, Staind, Bad Wolves 8/20, 7 PM, Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, Tinley Park, on sale Fri 1/31, 10 AM

Draft Week, Bambiraptor, Bishop's Daredevil Stunt Club, Kachi the Band 2/7, 7 PM, Lincoln Hall

Drag Prom featuring Auntie Heroine, Hinkypunk, Abhijeet, Tenderoni, Wanda Screw, and Live Band Karaoke 2/15, 7 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Eve 6, Alien Ant Farm 5/24, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+

Family Crest, Beth Bombara 2/12, 9 PM, Schubas, 18+

Faux Furrs, Daydream Review, Flora, Breether 2/19, 8 PM, Subterranean, 17+

FitzGerald's 39th annual St. Patrick's Day Festival featuring Dooley Brothers, Fitz & the Celts, Belvederes, Cannonball, Shannon Rovers, and more 3/14, 1 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 1/31, 11 AM

Flamenco Quartet Project 3/9, 7:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston

Roberto Fonseca 3/8, 7 PM, Armitage Concert Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music

Fratellis 6/13, 8 PM, Metro, 18+

Frights 4/4, 7:30 PM, Bottom Lounge

Gentle Heat, Wombo, Sad Baxter, Sunblood 3/11, 9 PM,

Sleeping Village 5/5, 8 PM, House of Blues, on sale Fri 1/31, 3 PM

Glitter Picks fund-raiser for Planned Parenthood featuring Natalie Grace Alford, Bad Bad Meow, Bubbles Brown, Boys V.S. Girls, Chad the Bird, DJ Doom Dyke and guests from No Men, and more 2/6, 9:15 PM, Empty Bottle

Great Grandpa, Joey Nebulous, Miloe 4/11, 7 PM, Subterranean

Sammy Hagar & the Circle, Whitesnake, Night Ranger 8/14, 7 PM, Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, Tinley Park, on sale Fri 1/31, 10 AM

Ernie Hendrickson & the Roll On Band 3/6, 9 PM, Hideout **Hip Abduction** 4/11, 8:30 PM, Martyrs', on sale Fri 1/31, 10 AM

Hot Snakes 2/23, 9:30 PM, Empty Bottle

Iamnotshane 4/5, 6:30 PM, Chop Shop

Iguanas 6/19, 8:30 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 1/31, 11 AM

Ivy Queen 3/29, 8 PM, House of Blues, on sale Fri 1/31, 10 AM, 17+

Jade Novah 4/9, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+

James Taylor & his All Star Band, Jackson Browne 6/10, 7:30 PM, United Center, on sale Fri 2/7, 10 AM

J.I., Apollo Rai 2/6, 7 PM, Reggies' Rock Club

Kechi, Kahiem Rivera, Manny 10x, DJ Cash Era 2/12, 9:15 PM, Empty Bottle

Krewella 5/16, 9 PM, Concord Music Hall, on sale Fri 1/31, 10 AM, 18+

La Oreja De Van Gogh 6/8, 8 PM, House of Blues, on sale Fri 1/31, 10 AM, 17+

Lady Lamb 3/17, 8 PM, City Winery

Love & Basketball featuring DJ Chubb E. Swagg, Joe Kollege 2/16, 10 PM, Chop Shop

Lowerlipdrip, Griffen, Malci, RXM Reality 2/28, 9 PM, Subterranean, 17+

Lucii 2/21, 9 PM, Chop Shop, 18+

Mãgo de Oz, Liran' Roll 3/17, 8 PM, House of Blues, on sale Fri 1/31, 10 AM, 17+

Mako Sica, Traysh, Talsounds 2/20, 9 PM, Sleeping Village

Stephen Malkmus with Qais Essar & the Magik Carpet 4/2, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Stephen Marley 4/3, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston

Dave Matthews Band 6/26-6/27, 7:30 PM, Huntington Bank Pavilion, on sale Fri 2/21, 10 AM

Napalm Death, Aborted, Tombs, Wvrm, Inner Decay 4/24, 6 PM, Reggies' Rock

Club, on sale Fri 1/31, 10 AM, 17+ **North by North, Wilde, God Awful Small Affairs** 2/17, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle

Nothing Nowhere, Danger Incorporated, Ro Ransom, Bogues 5/15, 7 PM, House of Blues

One Love for Teri Bristol fund-raiser featuring Blu 9, Boy Alberto, Czboogie, Georgie Porgie, DJ Greg Haus, DJ Heather, Jeff Pazen, Jevon Jackson, Michael Serafini, Paul Johnson, Sandy Alvarado, and more 3/28, 10 PM, Smart Bar

Oreofest with DJ Oreo and more 2/21, 8 PM, Metro, 18+

Jay O'Rourke Band, Spies Who Surf 2/14, 7 PM, Reggies' Music Joint

Palaye Royale, Hunna, Arrested Youth 5/3, 6:30 PM, House of Blues, on sale Fri 1/31, 10 AM

Peach Pit, Haley Blais 4/30, 9 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+

Phosphorescent 5/7, 7:30 PM, Park West, on sale Fri 1/31, 10 AM

Pokey LaFarge 6/4, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Alfonso Ponticelli 3/13, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston

Porches, Sassy 009 4/16, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

The Read podcast featuring Kid Fury & Crissle 5/9, 8 PM, the Vic, on sale Fri 1/31, 11 AM, 18+

Reigning Sound 3/3, 9 PM, Sleeping Village

Reuben & the Dark, Faux Prix 2/18, 8 PM, Schubas, 18+

DJ Shadow 5/14, 8 PM, Park West, 18+

Soul Sisters featuring Untamed Shrews with Laura Doherty, Maryanne Johnson, Cristina Mercader Blue Band, John Mead's Rock & Soul Revue Ensemble, Anne-Marie Akin, Donna Herula, Jackie Jasperson & John Erickson, and more 2/15, 8 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music

Steely Dan, Steve Winwood 6/26, 7:30 PM, Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, Tinley Park

Stereolab 5/10, 7:30 PM, the Vic, 18+

Sunk Heaven (Sediment Club) 3/3, 9:30 PM, Hideout

Mayo Thompson 3/25, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+

Smiley Tillmon Band featuring Kate Moss 3/25, 8 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 1/31, 11 AM

Tokimonsta 5/9, 9 PM, Metro, 18+

Tommy Cash 4/1, 7:30 PM, Lincoln Hall

Tweens 4/19, 8:30 PM, Hideout, on sale Fri 1/31, 10 AM

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Gettoblaser, Ares, Intermod- al 2/7, 10 PM, Spy Bar

Vagabon, Angelica Garcia 4/15, 8 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music

WGCI's Big Jam 2: Ballers & Rappers Edition featuring Dababy, Lil Baby, Iman Shumpert, Andre Drummond 2/15, 9 PM, Credit Union 1 Arena at UIC, 18+

Windy City Smokeout featuring Darius Rucker, Dierks Bentley, Jon Pardi, Morgan Evans, Riley Green, Cody Johnson, Ryan Hurd, Cody Canada & the Departed, Randy Rogers Band, Lainey Wilson, Tyler Booth, Ross Ellis, Angie K, Walker County, and more 7/10, 2 PM; 7/11-7/12, noon, United Center

UPDATED

Astrid S, Josie Dunne 4/24, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, canceled; refunds available at point of purchase

Dadju, LP Offishal 2/12, 7 PM, Concord Music Hall, canceled; contact point of purchase for refund information

Soulwax 3/3, 8 PM, Metro, show postponed; contact point of purchase for refund information, 18+

UPCOMING

Sam Bush 2/7, 8 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music

Com Truise (DJ set), Jeremiah Meece, Abstract Science DJs 2/13, 10 PM, Smart Bar

Jacques, Jacob Latimore, FYB, Bluff City 2/9, 7 PM, House of Blues

KCL, Chris Siebold/Tim Seisser/Jonathan Marks 2/8, 7 PM, Reggies' Music Joint

Kembe X, Alex Wiley 2/9, 7 PM, Schubas

Paranoyds, Spendtime Palace 2/7, 9:30 PM, Hideout

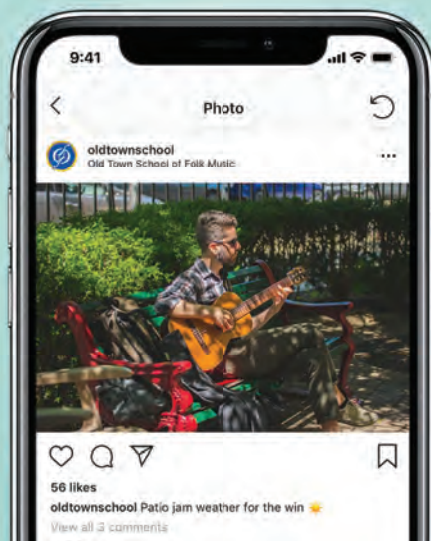
Rusko 2/7, 9 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+

J. Roddy Walston & Palm Palm, Parker Gispert 2/6, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston

Waltzer, Andrew Sa, Space Gators 2/7, 9:30 PM, Sleeping Village

Young Xav, Johlee, Kenny-flowers 2/8, 8 PM, Reggies' Rock Club, 18+

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SAVAGE LOVE

Stranger things

A threesome-loving boyfriend respects some guy more than boundaries.

By DAN SAVAGE

Q: I'm a 33-year-old woman in a relationship with a 43-year-old man. My boyfriend's fantasy is to have a threesome with another man. He enjoys watching me have sex with other men and then intermittently fucking me. But he mostly likes to watch me get fucked. For a long time, my boyfriend would send nudes or videos of him fucking me to men we met on dating apps. We would talk dirty about it during sex. Recently, we met up with a man for the first time. I don't think it went well.

My boyfriend and I have had conversations about my fear of contracting an STI. So before the threesome started, I explained that condoms were required. They both agreed. This guy was really nervous and when he put a condom on, he went flaccid. He would try to fuck me with his flaccid, condom-covered penis. He would take the condom off, jerk off, get semi-hard, put a con-

dom back on, go completely soft again. Even when I sucked the guy's dick: nothing. So my boyfriend, who was observing and jerking off, suggested we forget the condoms in the hopes this guy could stay hard. I said no and restated my boundary. The guy still couldn't get it up, hopped out of bed, and started getting dressed. My boyfriend offered to let the guy cream pie me if he would stay. I said fuck no and the guy left.

I don't know why the guy couldn't get hard. But I certainly don't think my boundary should be compromised because a stranger can't get it up. My boyfriend keeps suggesting we meet up with this guy again so he can "get closure." He really wants to watch this guy at least come on me. My boyfriend and this guy have since texted about him fucking me again.

I thought this guy was kind of an asshole. My boyfriend was definitely an asshole. My questions are: If I'm uncom-

fortable during a threesome, how do I politely call it off? I don't want to embarrass anyone, but this went on for two hours and the guy never got it up. How do I terminate a threesome without sounding like a bitch? —**THREESOME OBVIOUSLY DRIED UP MY PUSSY**

A: To politely call off a threesome, TODUMP, all you gotta say is, "Hey, this isn't working for me—let's take a rain check." Say it while pulling up your pants and use your "final answer" voice.

And the "rain check" thing doesn't have to be sincere. The "rain check" thing is mostly a nice, polite, face-saving, ego-sparing way to ease someone out of your pants/bed/playroom/apartment/whatever. And if anyone starts arguing with you, don't worry about being polite, TODUMP. Go ahead and be a bitch: "This is over, you/they need to go, rain check rescinded, asshole/assholes."

And while we're on the

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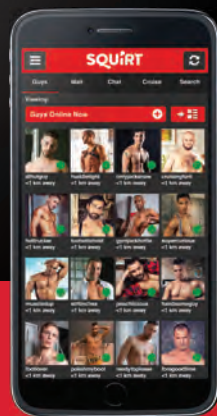
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OPINION

WILL PORADA / UNSPLASH

subject of terminating things with assholes, TODUMP, you need dump your incredibly shitty fucking boyfriend immediately—and there's no need to be polite about it. Fuck him. Your boyfriend tried to coerce you into having sex without condoms when he knew you didn't want to; you consented to having a threesome on the condition that condoms be used. Attempting to reopen negotiations about your stated boundaries once the threesome was underway was a violation of your consent. And your boyfriend knew you wouldn't want to embarrass anyone and maliciously attempted to weaponize your consideration for other people's feelings against you! Can't you see that? He was hoping you wouldn't embarrass him by refusing to have sex without condoms after he "offered" to let this guy cream pie you (come inside you) to get him to stay! He was hoping you'd rather risk an STI than risk embarrassing or contradicting him! And on top of that, he spoke to this guy like it was up to him—up to them—what happened next, like you were a Fleshlight or tube sock or something!

And now your asshole boyfriend is pressuring you to get back together with a guy who couldn't get it up with a condom on when he knows you don't want to have sex without condoms? A guy who couldn't be bothered to say goodbye after you sucked his fucking dick? And your boyfriend is claiming you owe him (or them) closure? WTF?

This relationship should have been over the moment your boyfriend made it clear some stranger's dick was more important to him than your health, safety, and boundaries. In that moment—that moment he attempted to barter away your boundaries—he proved he can't be

trusted and you aren't safe with him, TODUMP, alone or with a third.

DTMFA.

This is every woman's nightmare scenario when it comes to cuckolding or hot-wifing—that her boyfriend or husband will pressure her to do things she doesn't want to do during a sexual encounter with another man. Guys like your boyfriend not only don't deserve to have GGG girlfriends or their fantasies fulfilled, they ruin things for other wannabe cucks, stags, and hot husbands. He not only deserves to be alone forever; he deserves to be kicked in the balls forever.

Q: One of my closest friends kissed me while very drunk, told his female partner, and now he's not allowed to see me anymore, even in group settings. (I am also female.) I understand that cutting off contact is the universally recommended first step after someone cheats, but considering how close we are as friends, it is heartbreaking to think I might lose him over this one incident. We are former coworkers and we've been close friends and regular drinking buddies for 12 years. Nothing has EVER happened between us before this one very drunk night. We ended up making out on the sidewalk outside of a bar and exchanged a few semi-dirty text messages later that night, which—unfortunately for all of us—his partner saw. He thinks we just need to be patient and one day we'll be able to pick up our friendship where we left off. And while I know he needs to prioritize his partner now, I'm scared that we actually won't be able to stay friends after this. Do I just swallow my sadness about the likelihood of losing a best friend over a relatively minor infidelity? Or is there anything I can do

to help the situation? FWIW: I'm in a happy open marriage and have never once tried to initiate anything with him. I've never been attracted to him before and wouldn't want anything to happen between us again, anyway, even if the kiss was hot. Complicating matters, my friend wanted to re-raise the possibility of opening up his relationship with his partner, which he insists has nothing to do with me. (My friend is male and his partner and I are both female.) —FRIEND WITH NO BENEFITS

A: Hmm . . . I have a hunch you were something of a sore subject before this incident, FWNB, however isolated. If the text messages your friend's partner saw confirmed fears she'd already been told were irrational, your exile is likely to last as long as their relationship does. But take heart: if your friend decides to reopen discussions about opening up their relationship in the wake of this incident, your friend will likely be single again soon. If they do manage to stay together, FWNB, the only way to get back into her good graces—and back in your friend's life—is to gracefully accept your exile. (Going to her and saying, "It only happened because we were so drunk!" isn't quite the slam dunk you think it is, seeing as you and her boyfriend are drinking buddies.) It's a paradox, I realize, but if she sees that her boyfriend is willing to cut off all contact with you to set her mind at ease, FWNB, she may be willing to give your friendship her blessing down the road. **A**

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Notice is hereby given, pursuant to "An Act in relation to the use of an Assumed Business Name in the conduct or transaction of Business in the State," as amended, that a certification was registered by the undersigned with the County Clerk of Cook County, Registration Number: Y20002981 on January 15, 2020 Under the Assumed Business Name of P AND HOME SERVICES with the business located at 328 OAKMONT DR, BARTLETT, IL 60103 The true and real full name(s) and residence address of the owner(s)/partner(s) is: PAUL SOCKI 328 OAKMONT DR, BARTLETT, IL 60103, USA

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to "An Act in relation to the use of an Assumed Business Name in the conduct or transaction of Business in the State," as amended, that a certification was registered by the undersigned with

the County Clerk of Cook County. Registration Number: Y19001590 on June 18, 2019 Under the Assumed Business Name of MACK FINANCIAL SPECIALIST COMPANY with the business located at 7116 S. CORNELL AVE APT 2B, CHICAGO, IL 60649 The true and real full name(s) and residence address of the owner(s)/partner(s) is: WILLIAM E. MCNEAL, 7116 S. CORNELL AVE APT 2B CHICAGO, IL 60649, USA

This letter is to notify that on February 25, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. an auction will be held at 83rd & Halsted Self Storage, Inc., located at 8316 S. Birkhoff Ave, Chicago, IL 60620, to sell the following articles held within said storage units to enforce a lien existing under the laws of the state of Illinois.

475 Natalie Bennett
107 James Harris
341 Keith Mays, Jr.
117 Barbara Dukes
156 Jazzerae Carr
335 Stephen Grandberry

This letter is to notify that on February 25, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. an auction will be held at Hyde Park Self Storage, Inc., located at 5155 S. Cottage Grove Ave, Chicago, IL 60615, to sell the following articles held within said storage units to enforce a lien existing under the laws of the state of Illinois.

413A James Hendricks
46 Alvin Daniels
423 Dorothy Heard
341 Keith Mays, Jr.
10194 Raymond White
535 Candice Martin
10120 Thomas Murton
371 Darryl G. Fairley
10153 James A Lott
6 Raymond White
544 Chanel Long
100 Mescha Lammey
267 Erika Richardson
463 James Hendricks
V333 Darryl Simmons
374 Brienne Kelly
61 Dante Edwards
71 Lazinnal Brandon
10147 Brienne Kelly
10158 Waymon Curry
202C Stephen Weinstein

This letter is to notify that on February 25, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. an auction will be held at South Shore Self Storage, Inc., located at 7843 S. Exchange Ave, Chicago, IL 60649, to sell the following articles held within said storage units to enforce a lien existing under the laws of the state of Illinois.

265 Wesley Jones
237 Da Great Yekuti Azor El
231 Rashaunda Sanders
444 Ned Leeper
601 Alicia Washington
322 Cozette Armstrong
505 Cozette Armstrong
255 Althea Rayford
253 Erica Goolley
208 Briana Johnson
442 Korianda Johnson
328 Jess Gill

This letter is to notify that on February 25, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. an auction will be held at Aaron Bros. Self-Storage, Inc., located at 4034 S. Michigan Ave, Chicago, IL 60653, to sell the following articles held within said storage units to enforce a lien existing under the laws of the state of Illinois.

122 Jeremy Clark
600A Narlin Brothers
306 Enora Clay
558 Kamla Ronan
541 Royal Traders
548 Anna Long
117 Brian McCoy
201 Horace Howard
544 Brian McCoy
329 Tanya Lyda

STATE OF ILLINOIS, PUBLICATION NOTICE OF COURT DATE FOR REQUEST FOR NAME CHANGE. Location Cook County - County Division - Case Type: Name Change from Cheryl Marie Malden to malden cheryl marie Court Date March 03, 2020, 9:30 AM in Courtroom #1707 Case # 2020C0NC000008

STATE OF ILLINOIS, PUBLICATION NOTICE OF COURT DATE FOR REQUEST FOR NAME CHANGE. Location Cook County - County Division - Case Type: Name Change from Jeffrey Raynard Sanders to sanders jeffrey raynard Court Date March 11, 2020, 9:30 AM in Courtroom #1706 Case # 2020C0NC000029

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STATE OF ILLINOIS. PUBLICATION NOTICE OF COURT DATE FOR REQUEST FOR NAME CHANGE. Location Cook County - County Division - Case Type: Name Change from Jason Bradley Medalis to Emma Jaye Medalis Court Date February 19, 2020, 1:30 PM in Courtroom #203 Case # 20195009339

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to "An Act in relation to the use of an Assumed Business Name in the conduct or transaction of Business in the State," as amended, that a certification was registered by the undersigned with the County Clerk of Cook County. Registration Number: Y20003003 on January 16, 2020 Under the Assumed Business Name of SUDDEN UNIVERSE with the business located at 11001 DEBLIN LN APT 101, OAK LAWN, IL 60453. The true and real full name(s) and residence address of the owner(s)/partner(s) is: MARK RICHARD BERNAL 11001 DEBLIN LN APT 101, OAK LAWN, IL 60453, USA

owner(s)/partner(s) is: RAFAL MAJOREK 6545 W DICKENS AVE. APT. 2W, CHICAGO, IL 60707, USA

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to "An Act in relation to the use of an Assumed Business Name in the conduct or transaction of Business in the State," as amended, that a certification was registered by the undersigned with the County Clerk of Cook County. Registration Number: Y20003074 on January 27, 2020 Under the Assumed Business Name of FISH AMONG BICYCLES with the business located at 1301 W FLETCHER ST #602, CHICAGO, IL 60657. The true and real full name(s) and residence address of the owner(s)/partner(s) is: SARA MICHELLE BIEKER, 1301 W FLETCHER ST #602, CHICAGO, IL 60657, USA

in the conduct or transaction of Business in the State," as amended, that a certification was registered by the undersigned with the County Clerk of Cook County. Registration Number: Y20003049 on January 22, 2020 Under the Assumed Business Name of TWISTED KITTY KOCKTAILS with the business located at 4700 S. LAKE PARK 308, CHICAGO, IL 60615. The true and real full name(s) and residence address of the owner(s)/partner(s) is: KATHERINE THOMAS, 4700 S. LAKE PARK 308, CHICAGO, IL 60615

STATE OF ILLINOIS. PUBLICATION NOTICE OF COURT DATE FOR REQUEST FOR NAME CHANGE. Location Cook County - County Division - Case Type: Name Change from Ki Won Lee to Kiwon Julian Lee. Court Date March 25, 2020, 9:30 AM in Courtroom #1706 Case # 2020CONC000047

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to "An Act in relation to the use of an Assumed Business Name in the conduct or transaction of Business in the State," as amended, that a certification was registered by the undersigned with the County Clerk of Cook County. Registration Number: Y20003049 on January 22, 2020 Under the Assumed Business Name of TWISTED KITTY KOCKTAILS with the business located at 4700 S. LAKE PARK 308, CHICAGO, IL 60615. The true and real full name(s) and residence address of the owner(s)/partner(s) is: KATHERINE THOMAS, 4700 S. LAKE PARK 308, CHICAGO, IL 60615



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